

The University of Chicago

BRET HARTE, JOAQUIN MILLER, AND
THE WESTERN LOCAL COLOR STORY: A STUDY
IN THE ORIGINS OF POPULAR
FICTION

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE
HUMANITIES IN CANDIDACY FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE
AND LITERATURE

1936

By

ROGER RILUS WALTERHOUSE

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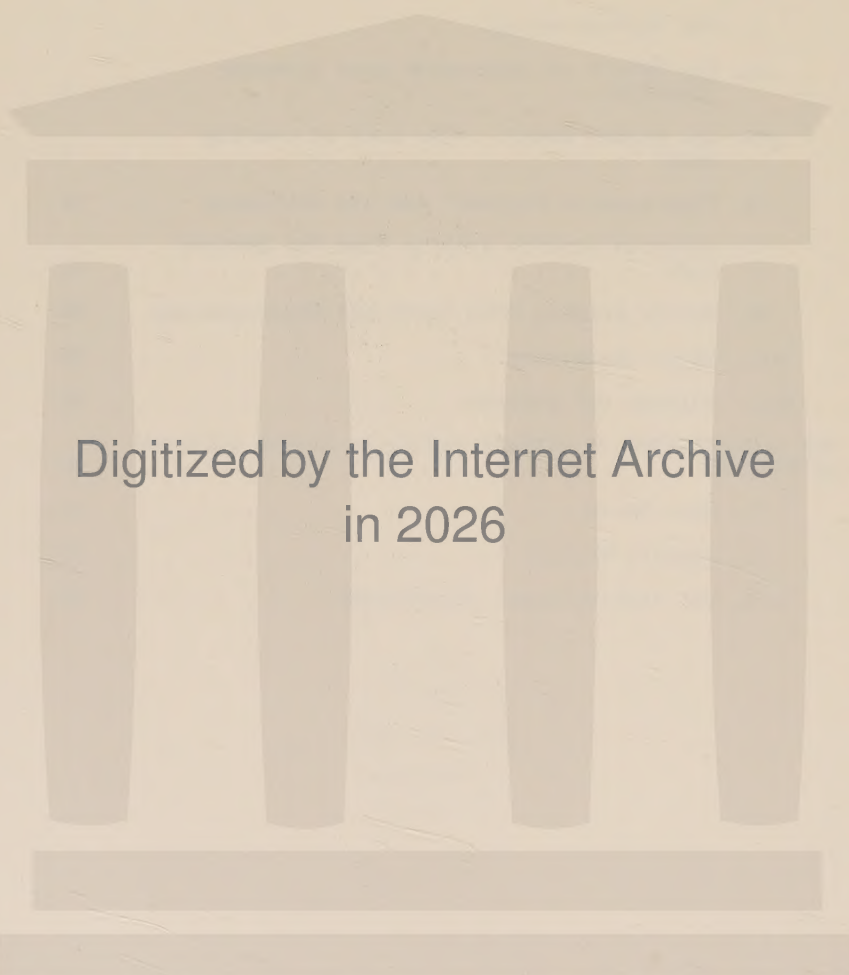
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I. THE MECHANICAL ELEMENTS OF FAR WESTERN FICTION

1. The Western School

The popular fiction surrounding any epochal topic, such as the American Revolution, the Civil War, or the Indian frontier, always has tended to become standardized in its characters and situations. The reader of one type of war story expects and desires to hear how a cowardly youth becomes a hero upon the battlefield; the reader of Indian stories expects to learn how an all-sagacious frontiersman saves helpless protégés by putting his ear to the ground and anticipating the stealthy approach of savages; the reader of a certain type of nautical fiction enjoys the plight and eventual escape of a landsman who has been cast among brutal seamen. These particular formulae today are thoroughly familiar and thoroughly hackneyed; in the nineteenth century they were common property to some of the best-known, as well as to minor fiction writers. Considered as one of a group who were exploiting the same topic as he, many an outstanding author would appear to be primarily a portrayer of customs and events already associated in the public mind with his subject.

In February, 1880, Ambrose Bierce¹ protested against an American weekly which had published a drawing of a California mining town wherein the men portrayed were heavily armed with revolvers and knives. Such a scene was not compatible with the well-mannered and cultured Pacific Coast society of that day, but it was a representation which would appeal to the average man's conception of California; it was considered worthy of publication, although a portrayal of respectable citizens in a staid California community undoubtedly would not have been. Material suited to popular fiction lay in the mining regions, and it is not surprising to discover that many writers were attracted by the sort of

¹The article, "California Mining Life," which occurs among the unsolicited contributions of The Californian, I, 188-89, is signed merely with the initials "A.B." In the preceding month, however, an article signed "Ambrose Bierce" had appeared among the unsolicited contributions; cf., Californian, I, 91-93.

portrayal to which Bierce objected. Nor is it surprising to discover that characters and situations, when once popularly associated with the setting, became standardized to the point of automatism.

The present dissertation is concerned with stories located in the Far West--chiefly with stories laid in California, Oregon, Nevada, Arizona, and in the mining regions of Colorado. In 1868, the year which marked the founding of the Overland Monthly in California, at least seven such stories and narrative sketches were published; one was by Bret Harte. In 1869 at least twenty-seven, with four by Harte, were published; and in the following year there were as many as thirty-two, including some half a dozen by Harte. A school of Far Western local color fiction was developing. It was destined to become an unusually homogeneous school, since a great proportion of the writers lived in the same part of the country, drew their materials from the same sources, and contributed most of their productions to the same California journal. It is true that many of the stories (particularly those written for Western readers) were located superficially--perhaps through allusions to local flora, fauna, or mission buildings.¹ In most of them, however (particularly in those written for Eastern readers), the popular conception of Western life does supply important material; frequently it supplies the initial source of inspiration.

Henry Childs Merwin has undertaken to demonstrate Bret Harte's fidelity to the genuine conditions of Far Western society through a comparison of Harte's tales with incidents actually reported by early visitors to the mining regions. He has shown that such events did happen and that such men as Harte portrays truly lived.² Plausible sources for many of Harte's stories have been discovered in the fictionist's own experiences by George R. Stewart. Professor Stewart points out incidentally Harte's occasional borrowing from motifs popularized by such authors as Murfree and Cable--a circumstance which he attributes to the pressure of numerous contracts after the association in 1885 with

¹By the 1890's the Overland was publishing chiefly stories of contemporary life on the Pacific Coast; in its pages fiction in the Bret Harte vein had become fairly rare.

²The Life of Bret Harte (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1931).

the literary agent, A. P. Watt.¹ It is the purpose of the present study to consider the entire school of writers who, in conjunction with Harte, produced Far Western narratives after the founding of the Overland. More than eight hundred examples of nineteenth century Western fiction, including one hundred and fifty-seven by Harte, provide the material under discussion.

Harte's characters, however true they may be to early chronicles² or to his personal reminiscences, often are recognizable as stock characters of Western literature, and his situations as stock situations. Even the points of view which are implicit in his works towards the religious institutions, the law courts, or the racial issues of the West are found to be similarly implicit in the works of many contemporary authors. Harte's use of popularized motifs was not, as Professor Stewart believes, a development of late years (when quantity rather than literary excellence was demanded of him), but as will be shown, characterized some of his earliest stories of note, not excluding "The Luck of Roaring Camp."

Harte was one of the few writers in the group to collect his works regularly into permanent book form after they had been published in magazines. His principal rival in doing so was Joaquin Miller--a weak imitator in the school of Far Western fiction, carrying to excess its most extravagant mannerisms and repeating with small variation its most hackneyed formulae. Since in his own day Miller received little of the critical recognition accorded Harte and since today he is remembered as a poet rather than as a story-teller, a lengthy consideration of his tales and novels ordinarily would be of little consequence. In the present study, however, it is not originality of composition which is sought, but any stereotyped elements that may have contributed to story after story.

A survey of these standardized elements, it is hoped, will be of value not so much in re-estimating the works of Bret Harte,

¹Bret Harte: Argonaut and Exile (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1931).

²In place of verifying Harte's use of local coloring, these chronicles probably afford an important source of his inspiration. They provide not an accurate but an exaggerated picture of the mining regions. Early reporters had looked with journalistic eyes for the spectacular, and often the exceptional, conditions of life. In Far Western fiction these were the conditions which became most thoroughly stereotyped.

as in casting light upon the professional creation of magazine fiction in the second half of the nineteenth century. Hundreds of stories published in a period of some fifty years will be found to have depended, in a large or small measure, upon certain mechanical material. The same result, unquestionably, would be revealed through a study of Southern fiction or of New England fiction; and, as certainly, a reciprocal influence between the different local groups could be shown. Were it not for the traditions which grew among such centralized schools, American literature scarcely would have followed the exact course which it did follow.

11. The Effect of Insularity upon Literary Invention

Harte's stories, together with journalistic accounts of early California life, were studied by minor authors of Western fiction--not all of whom, it occasionally appears, had seen the Pacific Coast; Bret Harte, at the same time, read the works of some of the minor authors. Without denying his preëminence among these writers, an observation may be made to the effect that the influence was reciprocal and that any theme or artifice introduced into Western fiction became the common property of all. A striking illustration of this observation is seen in the wide adoption by the group of the old literary device which centers about a transvested woman who is mistaken for a man or about a transvested man who is mistaken for a woman. Early accounts of Western life perhaps justified a few such complications in fiction. J. Ross Browne had reported in 1860 that many a Western woman assumed masculine garb, evidently for the sake of convenience;¹ history had it that San Francisco merchants, for lack of salesladies, once robed beardless boys in feminine apparel to entice customers.²

The first suggestion of a "transvestist" in Overland fiction was contained in "Mr. Ela's Story," published by Mrs. F. F. Victor during the period of Harte's editorship.³ Mr. Ela,

¹"A Peep at Washoe," First Paper, Harper's Monthly, XXII (December, 1860), 12.

²Stephen Powers, "The California Ranch," Atlantic, XXXV (June, 1875), 687.

³Overland, V (December, 1870), 556-64.

reviewing his adventures in the wilderness, mentions an encounter with a young boy and he asserts parenthetically that the boy was not a woman in disguise. It is intimated, apparently, that transvested women were not unfamiliar to those acquainted with Far Western life or else that they were not unfamiliar to readers of popular fiction. Six months after Mrs. Victor's story such figures became familiar to readers of the Atlantic and the Overland; for in July, 1871, two tales containing them appeared concurrently, one in the former magazine by Harte, one in the latter by Ambrose Bierce. The hero of Harte's "Poet of Sierra Flat"¹ has produced a poem of great local popularity. Being unable to duplicate its success with a composition recited from the theatrical stage, he is treated roughly by the audience; then it turns out that he is a woman in disguise. In Bierce's "The Haunted Valley"² a man who murders a Chinaman is acquitted by California jurymen and praised by local church officials on the ground that the extermination of Chinamen is desirable; then the reader is made to know that the slain Chinaman was in actuality a white woman. In August, 1872, A. S. Evans published "Manuel" in the Overland.³ His hero rescues an eight-year-old Mexican boy from an Indian massacre and later saves him from the hands of a bloodthirsty Texan; in the course of time, it is revealed that Manuel, too, is a woman in disguise. By 1875 the device was seized upon by Joaquin Miller. Mormons in his novel, The First Fam'lies of the Sierras⁴ (and in his drama, The Danites),⁵ pursue one Nancy Williams, whose family they have put to death. Suspense is aroused over the question whether or not the only "good woman" in the vicinity is she (in the drama this lone being is actually assassinated by one of Brigham Young's "Destroying Angels"). Final events in Miller's novel prove that the "good woman" is not Nancy Williams--but that a young miner named Billy Piper is Miss Williams in disguise. At the climax of Chapter vii in B. R.'s lengthy "Murderers'

¹Atlantic, XXVIII, 115-20.

²Overland, VII, 88-95.

³Ibid., IX, 146-55.

³(London: George Rutledge, 1875). All references and citations in the present work refer to the edition of 1876, published in Chicago by Jansen, McClurg, and Co.

⁴Joaquin Miller's Poems (San Francisco: The Whitaker & Ray Co., 1910), VI, 1-62.

Bar,"¹ a mysterious prowler turns out to be a female saloon decoy.

However preposterous the motif of the transvested woman may appear, it continued to be used for another twenty-five years by writers of Western fiction. "Mr. Ela's Story," with its boy who is not a woman, won especial popularity. In 1877 it was republished by the authoress in a volume of collected tales.² In the same year an obviously pirated revision entitled "Elam's Adventure" appeared in a London journal.³ In 1879, D. C. Macdonald (an occasional contributor to Appleton's) stole the English piracy, garbled it further, and submitted it to Lippincott's under the title of "Joseph's Adventure."⁴ Bret Harte in the preceding year had already modified the formula by having a woman turn out to be a man.⁵ An aged couple are the pride of Rough-and-Ready camp: miners chauvinistically force strangers to eat the woman's pies and they entrust to her husband the town's postmastership and the treasuries of local lodges; but, when its funds are embezzled, the camp learns that it has been imposed upon by two Australian actors--the aged woman is a man, an ex-convict. Harte's "At the Mission of San Carmel" (1884) is the story of a man seeking an heiress who has been lost since childhood. Though he finds a lady who at first appears to be she, the real heiress--unaware of her own sex--is living as an acolyte under the supervision of a fanatical padre.⁶ In a tale published three years later by Forbes Heermans a widowed French woman, unfamiliar with the English tongue, takes passage on a stagecoach; she learns where other passengers conceal their money, then transforms herself

¹Southern Magazine, XVI (April, 1875), 360-73.

²The New Penelope and Other Stories (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft, 1877).

³The Argosy, XXIII (May, 1877), 391-400.

⁴Lippincott's, XXIII (March, 1879), 375-80.

⁵"Two Saints of the Foothills," Scribner's Monthly, XV (April, 1878), 810-15. Possibly he had read Aldrich's "Made-moiselle Olympe Zabriski" in the Atlantic, XXXII (October, 1873); here a Manhattan social leader learns that a supposed female acrobat, who has taken his gifts, is a male imposter.

⁶Several times Harte uses the clothing disguise as an incidental means of furthering his plots; cf., "Flip," "In the Carquinez Woods," "A Belle of Canada City."

into a man and robs them.¹ In 1888 Ellen Jakeman told of a supposed horse thief who, after being hanged by vigilantes, is discovered to be an innocent woman.² Near the end of the century there appeared a narrative in which a pair of Californians battle furiously for possession of a beautiful Central American woman--only to find that their inamorata is a Guatemala revolutionary conspirator hiding in disguise. The author was Frank Norris.³

iii. The Reform Motif: "The Luck of Roaring Camp"

If a mere literary artifice could achieve such vogue in Western writings, it is not surprising to discover that motifs more indigenous to the Pacific slope held even greater sway over the creative faculties of Harte's group--especially after two thoroughly Western stories had won the acclaim accorded "The Luck of Roaring Camp" and "Tennessee's Partner." Of these two stories (each of which provided an archetype to local colorists) the first, at the time of its appearance, was the less novel; it is safe to affirm that even without Harte's example something very much like "The Luck" would have been written.

Perhaps the most celebrated aspect of early gold rush society was the scarcity of women. Long afterwards anecdotes were circulated about miners who signalled incoming vessels to ask if any women were aboard, likewise about miners who stood petrified in the streets at the sight of a living woman, and there were anecdotes describing grotesque masculine cookery and domestic inefficiency.⁴ Thoughtful observers, long before the founding of the Overland, had commented seriously upon the womanless era. As early as 1849 the lawlessness of California life had been attributed to the lack of domestic ties and the softening influence of female society among miners. With the advent of numerous prostitutes into the gold regions, many witnesses had reported a de-

¹"The Widow of the Late Smith," in Heermans' Thirteen Tales of the Far West (Syracuse: C.W. Bardeen, 1887), pp. 25-40.

²"Lynch Law's Last Victim," Western Galaxy, I (May, 1868), 422-28.

³"Two Hearts that Beat as One," A Deal in Wheat and Other Stories (New York: Doubleday, Page, 1903), pp. 130-50.

⁴Hinton R. Helper, The Land of Gold: Reality versus Fiction (Baltimore: Henry Taylor, 1855), p. 69; S. Powers, "The California Ranch," Atlantic, XXXV (June, 1875), 684-96.

cided moral improvement; and, where the advent of reputable women subsequently took place, the reform was reported to have been completed. Such a witness was Hinton R. Helper, who in 1855 had spoken thus of the prostitute class:

Paradoxical as the statement may sound, it is rigorously true that these very women have improved the morals of the community. Any one who, like myself, has had the opportunity of seeing California before and after the advent of these women, must have been struck with the decided improvement in society since their arrival. They have undoubtedly banished much barbarism, softened many hard hearts, and given a gentleness to the men which they did not possess before.¹

And of the reputable class he had spoken thus:

Lately, however, women of pure and lofty characters have emigrated to California, and, since their arrival, there has been a gradual and steady improvement of morals among the people and the Sabbath is now much better observed than it used to be. Soon after their arrival, schools and churches began to spring up, and social circles were formed; refinement dawned upon a debauched and reckless community, decorum took the place of obscenity; kind and gentle words were heard to fall from the lips of those who before had been accustomed to taint every phrase with an oath; and smiles displayed themselves upon the countenances to which they had long been strangers. Woman accomplished all this, and we should be ungrateful reprobates indeed if we did not honor, esteem and love her for it.²

Optimistic had been the testimony published this same year in the Annals of San Francisco by Soulé, Gihon, and Nisbet: "A larger female population, and a few more years, and San Francisco may yet be as distinguished for its public and private morals, as it has long unhappily been the reverse."³ And three years later, the Reverend Mr. William Taylor of the California Conference had sanctioned the words of his predecessors: "The introduction of virtuous women and good families is working a hopeful social reform throughout the mining regions."⁴ From such talk there had arisen a plan for exporting to the West shipments of "good women" selected from the Eastern surplus--and enterprising professional

¹The Land of Gold: Reality versus Fiction, p. 44. The passage is quoted partially by Merwin, Life of Bret Harte, p. 150.

²The Land of Gold, p. 44; quoted in Merwin, pp. 150-51.

³(New York: D. Appleton, 1855), p. 552.

⁴William Taylor, California Life Illustrated (New York: Published for the Author, 1858), p. 285.

reformers had given actual consideration to the project.¹

It was in February, 1857, that an anonymous portrayer of San Francisco life, drawing upon the popular conception of the West, became inspired to describe the imaginary arrival of the first "lady" in that city. A lawyer, prosecuting an unjust case, beholds her and checks his speech; custom-house clerks stop their activities to look at her; a saloon brawl is straightway adjourned; a Mexican desperado, bound to waylay a lone traveler, receives one glance from her eye and retraces his steps; San Francisco ruffians, intent upon violating the wives of Chilean immigrants, catch sight of her and wheel about, bereft of carnality; an invalid miner, on the point of gambling away his last three thousand dollars, sees her, conquers temptation, and buys a farm. "What was the spell that wrought these changes? . . . The power of woman!"²

This episode appeared in a rambling sketch written eleven years before the founding of the Overland and the composition of "The Luck of Roaring Camp," and in it one of the most popular of Western short story motifs already was formed. "Much barbarism" and "many hard hearts" were to be depicted, and then by a woman these conditions were to be softened and abolished. In respect to pure subject matter (not in respect to artistic quality) Bret Harte's chief innovation lay in the substitution of a child for a woman.

Other writers, evidently inspired by Harte's success, accepted the improvement without discarding the woman.

¹"If those humane societies now engaged in sending Eastern girls to the West as servants, could find it practicable to enlarge their business so as to send good girls of unblemished, certified character, to California for wives, I think it likely that a bachelor's fund could be raised in California, which would defray all the extra expense involved in the new department of the business. The thing would, of course, have to be judiciously managed, and not connected with the 'bloomer fashions' and 'women's rights,' as was an attempted enterprise of this kind a few years ago. They should go in care of good families, letting the bachelor subscribers, and the said families, alone know who they are, or where to be found after their arrival. . . . There are thousands of young men in California who, in their isolation, are going to ruin, who could be saved, and elevated to honorable citizenship, by the surplus of young ladies in the Eastern states who are worthy of good husbands." William Taylor, California Life Illustrated (1858), pp. 208-209.

²"The Old Adobe. A Romance Perhaps!" Putnam's Monthly, IX (February, 1857), 169-75.

Joaquin Miller, writing his First Fam'lies of the Sierras in 1874, carried out the formula at length.

One thousand men! Not a woman, not a child. . . . A thousand men, I said, and not a single woman; that is, not one woman who was what these men called "on the square." Of course, two or three fallen women, soiled doves, had followed the fortunes of these hardy fellows into the new camp. . . . [The men] fought and killed each other, and kept up the regular Sunday funeral all summer through, not because these bad women were there, but because the good women were not there.¹

The appearance of a woman and eventually of a child alter this condition. The Reverend Mr. T. W. Brotherton, writing in the same year his "Miner's Story,"² stresses for all it is worth the Sabbath-breaking and the celebrated profanity which characterized the womanless era:

Sunday evening, where the crimson and golden glory of the descending sun clothed the plain and hills with its vestments of loveliness, the effects of frequent potations began. There was profanity in the tents, profanity in the streets, profanity in the air, shouts and cries, the quick flash and sharp report of the pistol, the heavy thud of the knife, the infuriated yell of the fighters, the scream of the victim, the quick tread of some one hastening for a doctor.

Great is the annoyance of Brotherton's miners when a virtuous wife takes up her dwelling within the very precincts of their camp. But on awakening the next Sabbath morning they experience a rare sensation: they hear a woman's voice singing a hymn. Soon she advances towards them, and in conciliatory manner she invites them all to breakfast. Then--

"Gentlemen," said our hostess as she leant on her husband's arm, "this is Sunday. My husband informs me there is no church here, and no clergyman. If you have not other engagements for the day, it would give us great pleasure to occupy your time with us, reading at home, or making yourselves guides to us over the beautiful hills, or to the sweet little nooks which no doubt you have discovered in many places." For a moment we were silent; but the attractions of the gaming-tables, the drinking-saloons and dance-houses of San Antace faded before us, and from that day, Sunday became to us indeed a day of rest--the most delightful day of our mining lives.

The "good woman" brings to camp some fifty well-selected volumes of history, travel, and poetry, which the miners read with ever

¹Edition of 1876, pp. 8, 13, 14.

²Southern Magazine, XIV (Feb.-March, 1874), 109-27, 227-43.

increasing delight--taking scrupulous care not to soil the pages. She is an angel of mercy, carrying jelly to the sick and religious solace to the dying. Her struggle to bring about a local regeneration is crowned with success. William Turner, in "Daisy's Mission,"¹ does not disdain to plunder Harte's story even more directly than Miller and Brotherton; for his scene of action is called "Hell-Roaring Bar." To this most sinful of mining camps come a good woman and a child:

From this day a marked change took place. Everyone desired to be well thought of by the new-comers; dress became an object of solicitude; drunken yells rending the quiet night were less frequent; spirits of evil seemed to be quelled, and the Bar was on its good behavior.

The child totters about extracting temperance pledges from the miners as she cares for the sick and the dying; and so moving is her presence that the very saloon keeper becomes her chief convert. Like Harte's baby, Daisy meets death by drowning after her mission has been fulfilled. Mrs. Stowe's Little Eva, who probably replaced the "Luck" as a model in the creation of this character, is called to mind even more strongly by Mrs. Margaret Hosmer's "The Child of the Camp."² Here the small heroine is made to conduct a funeral service--"and a priest in his gown couldn't have done better." Each Sunday she leads the rough men in religious worship:

Sunday at the Bar used to be the day to look over old clothes and old letters, to smoke, to lounge, and sometimes to play at cards. It was now a regularly appointed custom to meet in Terence O'Donnell's house; clean and well brushed, with some rather odd attempts at improvement in the inevitable red shirt and long boots, and the miners would come thronging in, and each one would produce from the breast-pocket of his shirt a Bible that was the essence of his life's love or romance, the token of his mother's yearning devotion, his wife's prayerful tears, or his sweetheart's solemn pledge of faith. These tender mementoes seemed to carry with them the subtle influences of their giver's affection, for, opening them, the rough exteriors of the curious congregation presided over by the earnest but modest child, seemed to give place to their higher natures, and solemn thoughts and lofty aspirations rose on the swelling hymn chanted in pleasant measure by their tuneful voices. Nelly read such chapters as were selected for her, and then they repeated in harmonious concert the

¹Overland, XI (December, 1873), 515-19.

²Under the Holly; or a Week at Hopeton House. A Book for Girls. By "A Pair of Hands" (Philadelphia: Porter and Coates, 1870), pp. 283-84.

service suitable to the Lord's day. It was an improvement on the Old Sledge Sundays, and they learned to love the innocent missionary whose unconscious influence was all the deeper for its unpretending power.

Women, babies, and reform became so stereotyped a motif in Western fiction that it might be included incidentally in a story for little more than local color atmosphere. Even in "The Child of the Camp" the reform interest is combined with interest in the child's quest for her missing father. Mrs. Henry Deas, writing "Trust and Mistrust," in 1874, remarks only in passing that her heroine previously has reformed a mining camp.¹

With the reform motif, as with practically all the standardized material of Western fiction, many a writer sought novelty through terminating the course of stock events in a manner directly contrary to that divined by experienced readers. Harte's "Transformation of Buckeye Camp" is based upon a complete reversal of the motif which he himself had helped to popularize. A "bad woman"--a saloon proprietress--arrives in an upright camp of miners and brings about a mild relapse. Two stories of 1875 have to do with a supposed "good woman" who plays at reforming a camp through coyness or artfulness.² In two other tales, Harte's "In a Hollow of the Hills" and Mrs. F. F. Victor's "Sam Rice's Romance,"³ a lone woman joins the male passengers upon a stage coach. According to fictional tradition she should become a moral nucleus for the surrounding territory;⁴ but she is secretly in league with bandits who are lurking in ambush for the passengers who carry concealed gold. Forbes Heermans in 1887 added to this formula the device of revealing the woman to be a transvested

¹Overland, XIII (September, 1874), 233-42. A similar passage occurs in the anonymous "Maggie Nidever's Lovers," Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly, XXIII (January, 1887), 94-98.

²C. G. Dolliver, "Phoebe of Sandy Gulch," Overland, XIV (January, 1875), 74-79; B. R., "Murderers' Bar," Southern Magazine, XVI (March, April, 1875), 249-66, 360-73.

³Overland, VIII (April, 1872), 372-87.

⁴Cf., this passage in an earlier story written by Mrs. Victor herself: "The lady had lifted the rude men up to her level, when directly they were ashamed of their brandy and other vices and began to show instinctive traits of gentlemen" ("How Jack Hastings Sold his Mine," Lakeside Monthly, V [March, 1871], 204-212).

man.¹

In addition to these somewhat perverse modifications of the old motif, many fugitive bids for originality were based upon it. B. R.'s "Kanoŋville Tragedy" opens sensationally with the death of a camp's one "good woman" and a second lapse into barbarity.² In H. L. Wright's "The Angel on Earth," it is not a living woman, but the drowned body of a woman found in a river, which regenerates a camp of miners; her tomb becomes a shrine and a refuge to those fearing violence.³ A much less sensational modification is C. H. New's "Angel of Murphey's Gulch," wherein a lone woman works good deeds among miners who are already fairly moral.⁴ J. P. Widney, apparently in an attempt to outdo Harte's Cherokee Sal, eliminated the mining camp and wrote upon a reform which takes place in a Los Angeles brothel district when its most indecorous inhabitant gives birth to a child: "Upon the air that was laden with vice and wretchedness, the feeble tones of an infant cry wailed out, and the voice of cursing and the obscene jest were hushed, as to the hardened hearts came round afresh, with that feeble cry, memories of homes and scenes long forgotten."⁵

Not gracefully compatible with the "good woman" thesis, but likely to be connected with it in the stories, was an old saying to the effect that no wife would remain true to her husband if he took her to California.⁶ In 1855, H. R. Helper had elaborated upon this tradition, dividing wives into three categories and pointing out the dangers of Western environment to each. Those

¹"The Widow of the Late Smith," Thirteen Tales of the Far West (1887), pp. 25-40. In some stories the "epic" manner of Harte is reduced and only one miner is regenerated by a child: E. A. Revorg, "Sam," Appleton's, Second Series, V (July, 1878), 37-49; Miller, "49 the Gold-seeker of the Sierras" (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1884); F. Heermans, "Shingles," Thirteen Tales of the Far West, pp. 9-24; "The Assayer's Story," ibid., pp. 159-86.

²Southern Magazine, XII (May, 1873), 513-37.

³Overland, Second Series, II (October, 1883), 402-408.

⁴Cosmopolitan, XXII (January, 1897), 328-34.

⁵"The Communist's Baby," Overland, XII (February, 1874), 138-40.

⁶"Divorces are . . . growing very numerous here, and have helped to raise a general calumny against the sex."--Soule, Gihon, and Nisbet, Annals of San Francisco (1855), p. 503.

chaste for want of opportunity to be otherwise and those chaste because of public opinion, he had said, were released from restriction in California; and even those inherently virtuous were liable to become blinded by the glittering immoralities of Western society. Hence, he had concluded, any husband "who is foolish enough to take his wife with him" to California must have "wealth to gratify her most extravagant whims, time to devote exclusively to watching her, eyes keener than those of Argus, and cunning sharper than that of Vidocq."¹ This widely-known tradition gave rise to such stories as Lovell White's "Margaret Hemming," wherein a miner's wife frequents gay balls while her husband bitterly reiterates the old saying about wives in California--she is reformed in her wayward course only by the death of her neglected child. In Harte's works especially, the unfaithful wife is a frequent character. A lawyer of "In a Pioneer Restaurant" remarks:

"It's only the old story: the usual matrimonial infidelities that are mixed up with the Californian emigration. He leaves the regular wife behind,--fairly or unfairly, I can't say. She gets tired of waiting, after the usual style, and elopes with somebody else. The Western Penelope isn't built for waiting. . . ."

More popular in fiction, however, was the contention that a "good woman" would remain true to her husband despite the sinful environment. In Brotherton's "Miner's Story" great mirth is aroused by Jim Andrews's mortal dread of "that Feller"--a personified non-entity, who, he believes, is bound to lead astray the camp's "good angel." Additional mirth is aroused when he consoles a brow-beaten husband with his doctrine.

iv. "Tennessee's Partner" and its Analogues

Partner love was a second quality of mining life much used as a theme for short stories. While Jim Andrews is apprehensive of "that Feller," someone suggests that the camp's doctor may be he. Jim scouts the suggestion, however, because of a sacred bond which exists between the doctor and the "good woman's" husband: "You know he's Doc's pard; now pards don't do them air things." Bret Harte probably was the first in his school to take

¹The Land of Gold (1855), pp. 39-44.

up in a large way the motif of partner love.¹ "Tennessee's Partner" remains faithful to his bond in the teeth of an enraged community--in spite of the fact that the reprobate, Tennessee, has done "them air things" which pards don't do. Straightway, there developed a chain of stories depicting the devotion of two Western men--men usually, like Harte's, of completely opposite temper and moral caliber; often one is uncouth in deportment and muscular in physique, while the other is artistic and frail. The former, according to pattern, makes some sacrifice for the latter's welfare. When both fall in love with the same girl, the uncouth member conceals his passion and departs to live out a lonely existence.² Forbes Heermans, in "Shingles," couples this theme with the baby motif.³ His hero supports an ignoble partner through life and idealizes him after death, making a shrine of the dead man's profitless claim and spending the remainder of his days working it for the benefit of the partner's child.

The partner motif, like the reform motif, quickly was subjected to modifications. A new turn was given by Harte's "Iliad of Sandy Bar" (November, 1870), with its falling out of partners who are to be reconciled only by death-bed reunion. Mrs. F. F. Victor concluded a similar situation with the betrothal of one partner to the sister of the second.⁴ In some stories reconciliation is brought about when one irate partner risks his life to save the other from peril. Such is F. H. Loughhead's "John

¹Noah Brooks touches lightly upon the theme in "The Gentleman from Reno," Overland, I (October, 1868), 379-84. The date of "Tennessee's Partner" is October, 1869.

²So it is in S. R. Brockton's "Lumley's Pardner," ibid., XV (July, 1875), 65-70, and M. T. Mott's concurrently published "The Crosskey Boys," ibid., XIV (June, 1875), 514-23 and XV (July, 1875), 23-33. In J. T. MacKay's "Cinnabar City," the characters are not miners, but lawyers in a fairly civilized locality, Scribner's Monthly, VIII (August, 1874), 465-71. In J.K. Reeve's "Bennett's Partner," the one who has married the mutually loved girl dies cheerfully, knowing that now the other may have her, Lippincott's, LVI (December, 1875), 844-54. In F. H. Loughhead's "John Mitchell's Indictment," merely incidental mention is made of the fact that both love the same girl, Overland, Second Series, XXII (July, 1893), 16-22. In Mrs. Victor's "On the Sands," which was written before the motif became stereotyped, four partners quarrel for the favor of one girl, Lakeside, V (October, 1871), 363-73.

³Thirteen Tales of the Far West, pp. 9-24.

⁴"El Tesoro," Overland, VII (December, 1871), 560-69.

Mitchell's Indictments," wherein a miner who has been deserted by his companion during a quarrel proclaims himself a murderer, knowing that the other on reading the news will relent and return to prevent a lynching.¹ A multiple arrangement of the motif provides the structure of Josiah Royce's Feud of Oakfield Creek, in which two pioneers who have fought Indians side by side have altercations and are reconciled time and again--until, in a final quarrel, one is mortally wounded; then, as he dies, he makes his peace with the other.²

A more perverse alteration of the original formula than any found in these stories has to do with absolute breach of faith in a trusted partner.³ J. P. Widney's "Cain" depicts a young man whom strangers instinctively loathe; travelers refuse to let him be their companion, ruthless Indians slay a group of settlers, but him they refuse to touch.--That man has murdered his partner.⁴ Two partners love the same girl in Raymond's "Thanksgiving Joe"; one shoots the other and then wanders like Cain over five states, loathed at sight by all whom he meets; eventually he returns to the scene of his crime and discovers his old associate to be not merely living but anxious to forgive him; the absolved "Cain" later risks his life in a fruitless effort to save Joe from a burning cabin.⁵ The hero of Bret Harte's "Colonel Starbottle's Client" (1892), having been unwillingly provoked into honorably fighting and slaying the ignominious and parasitic partner whom he has long supported, henceforward devotes his life to making amends to the dead man's graceless relatives. He complies with their outrageous financial demands, he humbly permits one relative to spit in his face, and finally--though a Northern sympathizer--he dies in the Southern ranks filling his dead partner's hypothetical place. A novel perversion of the partner theme is

¹Overland, Second Series, XXII (July, 1893), 16-22.

²(Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1887).

³The treacherous partner had been used in several Western stories before partner love became a motif; the use in such stories is very incidental. Cf. "Archibald Blossom, Bachelor," Harper's Monthly, XXII (July, 1858), 213-31, and M. Hosmer, You-Sing (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Publication Committee, 1866).

⁴Overland, XIII (July, 1874), 30-37.

⁵Christian Union, X (November 25, 1874), 401-404.

found in W. M. Turner's "Pioneer Justice in Oregon."¹ Here there is recounted a lawsuit in which Partner Sprenger wins his case against Partner Sims--not primarily because justice is on his side, but because his advocate moves the sentimental jury by charging Sims with breach of partner love:

He told the jury that a man's partner was required to be his friend, to sustain him in evil and in good repute, to share with him in health, to nurse him in sickness, to divide his last ounce of dust with him, and to stand by him when all others had deserted him. . . . Sims had . . . violated the common law of the region, and robbed and abandoned--not Sprenger--but Sims' partner.

v. Recurrent Motifs Arising from Far Western Life

A number of miscellaneous qualities actually found in early Western society, or popularly ascribed to it, may be grouped together, for convenient consideration, as local color "machinery." Not only did they appear incidentally in many a story, but often they were fundamental to a plot.

Explanations of provincial nomenclature--which are frequently paradoxical--gave tone to story after story. In one tale there is the "Railroad Saloon," so-called "because there was no railroad then within hundreds of miles."² In another there is "La Calle de los Negroes," "so-called, as nearly as I can ascertain, because the Negro is never known to live there."³ A third tells of a locality named "Sandy Gulch," though "there was not sand enough visible to scour a pan."⁴

As for nicknames of people, they were so universally accepted in the mines that "even due bills were more frequent in these than in the original names of the individuals,"⁵ "the first confidential question, after intimacy seemed to warrant the

¹Overland, XII (March, 1874), 224-30.

²F. F. Victor, "An Old Fool," Part I, Overland, X (June, 1873), 501-13.

³J. P. Widney, "The Communist's Baby," ibid., XII (February, 1874), 138-40.

⁴C. G. Dolliver, "Phoebe of Sandy Gulch," ibid., XIV (January, 1875), 74-79.

⁵Mrs. Neall, "Gentleman Hanse," Part I, ibid., XI (August, 1873), 149-56.

liberty, was invariably, 'Saay, comrade, What was your name before you came here?'¹ But "the surest proof of confidence that the camp could show to a man was to refrain from inquisition into his antecedents."² In one story a miner is dubbed "Whispering,"-- "for the reason that his lightest word could be heard for a mile."³ "We calls him Joseph," explains a character of Joaquin Miller's, "because one day he fell in the pit."⁴ "They called him the Parson, because it was said he could outswear any man in camp," Miller remarks in another work.⁵ "We calls him 'deacon,' coz he wuz never inside uv er church in his hull life," says a character in a story published fully twenty-two years later.⁶ "His very respectable name . . . had for many years been ignored . . . in favor of the gratuitous title of Doctor," says Mary Hallock Foote.⁷ Harte also persistently explains gratuitous names: "The Judge, a singularly inequitable Missourian, with no knowledge whatever of the law, was an inspiration of gratuitous irony."⁸ The plots of some stories turn upon the difficulty of identifying people who are known only by nicknames. In one a doctor heals a wounded gambler; not until many years later, after his one-time patient has met death, does he realize that Poker Jim was his own brother.⁹ In two stories a miner, aiding a young girl to find her lost father, little suspects that it is his own

¹S. R. Brookton, "Lumley's Pardner," Overland, XV (July, 1875), 65-70.

²T. Gallagher, "Father McGrath," Lippincott's, LXIII (June, 1899), 823-30.

³Ibid.

⁴"Damming the Sacramento," Century, XXIV (July, 1882), 396-400.

⁵First Families of the Sierras (1876), p. 58.

⁶G. F. Lydston, "Poker Jim--Gentleman," Over the Hookah. The Tales of a Talkative Doctor (Chicago: Fred. Klein Co., 1896), pp. 355-438.

⁷The Led-Horse Claim (Boston: Ticknor and Co., 1883), pp. 53-54.

⁸"Left Out on Lone Star Mountain."

⁹G. F. Lydston, "Poker Jim--Gentleman," Over the Hookah, pp. 355-438.

beloved partner whom he is seeking.¹ Harte's play, Two Men of Sandy Bar (1876), has a wealthy father in search of a prodigal son, who, it happens, is known in the vicinity only as "Sandy"; John Oakhurst, the son's rascally partner, appropriates for a time the family name and fortune. Joaquin Miller in the 'eighties added many complications to the formula without producing any real innovation. Charles Devine enters into partnership with his father who has been lost twenty-five years and neither recognizes the other; for the younger Devine is known only as "Dandy Beaver" and the elder only as "Forty-nine." Young Devine accuses the elder of being his father's murderer.² Later Forty-nine attempts to kill him. In another version of the same story Miller adds episodes in which each endeavors to sacrifice his own life for the safety of the other before the mutual recognition is brought about.³ "You see," observes a character, "we baptize 'em over and give 'em new names, titles, and sich, when they come to Californy."⁴

Another idiosyncrasy of mining life to inspire a sequence of stories was the excitement over fabulous lost discoveries, rumors of which had swept the coast from the earliest months of the gold rush. Some rumors were based upon the reports of Indians, some upon the fact that men with apparent fortunes had died without disclosing the sources of their wealth; many had to do with mines worked by the Padres in bygone years, but kept secret in the hope that the church might regain its power over California. Josephine Clifford tells of a supposed Spanish ledge near Tucson which cost many lives. At various times after 1849, she asserts, the American army was beguiled into protecting mine seekers who pretended that military aid was necessary for the recovering of stolen cattle.⁵

¹Hosmer, "The Child of the Camp," Under the Holly (1870), pp. 259-96; H. Humphrey, "The Bonnefield Claim," Overland, XV (December, 1875), 558-67.

²"One of the World-Builders. A Sequel to 'The Shadows of Shasta,'" The Californian, IV, 277-88, 387-98, 496-502; V, 32-36, 130-37.

³'49 The Gold-Seeker of the Sierras (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1884).

⁴The Californian, IV, 389; '49, p. 54.

⁵"San Xavier del Bac," Western Monthly, IV (July, 1870), 28-34.

Of the several possibilities for story material, it was the legendary Spanish wealth which appealed most strongly to Western writers. Horace Stanton (in July, 1869) published "The Haunted Mines."¹ It is whispered that certain valuable mines once belonged to a murderous Spaniard, who, distracted by a spectre, closed them and pronounced imprecations upon any man who should reopen them. Foolish fear of this fabled curse brings near catastrophe to American prospectors. Another tale of lost Spanish wealth is Mrs. Victor's "El Tesoro" (December, 1871), wherein a ranchman offers a reward to any person who shall find the lost mine upon his ranch. The mine is found. The first man to discover the mine falls over a precipice; the second lives to enjoy his success.² T. A. Janvier's "The Lost Mine" (November, 1884) tells of a silver mine on which ancient Pueblo Indians have laid a curse because the Padres enslaved them and forced them to work it.³ A poverty-stricken Mexican discovers the spot and the evil spends its force upon him; he dies at the hand of an American prospector, who lives to enjoy the fortune.⁴

Possibly, the curse motif set a pattern for the authors of other stories of lost mines; at all events, the first finder in fiction commonly suffers death or runs mad. But Mark Twain's account in Roughing It of the Whiteman Cement Mine, likewise, anticipates the general formula of the stories, which were just beginning to appear.⁵ Three brothers, in the incident which he reports, once discovered immense wealth in the wilderness; but before reaching civilization one fell and died of injury and a second starved to death. The third, with mind deranged, staggered into a California village and gave a map of the spot to one Mr. Whiteman. The recipient, ever since, has found the lost mine

¹Western Monthly, II, 48-56.

²Overland, VIII, 560-69.

³Century, XXIX, 53-60.

⁴Other tales in which lost Spanish mines play a part include: G. Atherton, "The Doomsawoman," Lippincott's, L (September, 1892), 263-365; R. H. Savage, The Little Lady of Lagunitas (New York: American News Company, 1892); K. Munroe, The Golden Days of '49 (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1889); the opening of Harte's "In a Hollow of the Hills" (c. 1895).

⁵Roughing It (1872), pp. 259-64.

to be a curse. His every move watched by wary miners, who endeavor to dog his path, he has sought it for twelve or thirteen years without success. Mark Twain confesses how he himself set out to pursue Whiteman. Samuel Simpson wrote two stories about a legendary mine which in 1855 caused actual excitement in Oregon. In "The Lost Cabin" (November, 1872) a pair of successful prospectors are attacked by Indians; one is slain and the other lives only long enough to inform a friend of the cabin in which their gold is buried. The friend, on finding it, accidentally shoots himself, and his companion runs insane; the cabin remains lost.¹ In Simpson's second story, "The Fate of Hutchinson Wemble" (June, 1875), a swindler is discomfited when some men whom he has sent upon a wild-goose-chase into Oregon stumble upon the missing wealth.² Meanwhile, in 1873, Joaquin Miller announced that he would relate the true history of Oregon's Lost Cabin. He and a friend, hiding in the mountains, built the cabin themselves; and near it they found a small pocket of gold. Because of their secretive habits and their public display of a few bits of quartz, a general rush for the cabin ensued. Miller asserts that after he had burned the building, men came year after year in quest of it.³ In Stephen Powers's "The Lost Lead" (December, 1873) a man loses his mind while guiding friends to a locality in which he has found vast deposits of ore. Recovering sanity, he starts anew, but falls accidentally over a precipice.⁴ J. P. Widney's "Cain" (July, 1874) has to do with a legendary mine in Death Valley which brings destruction to its discoverers.⁵ R. W. Raymond's "Thanksgiving Joe" (November, 1874) characterizes a prospector who spends all his earnings in bribing Shoshone Indians to show him the "Lost Silver Mine"--"a mass of native silver, concerning which everybody knows that it exists, and nobody knows where." The discovery of the silver ends the story.⁶ In 1888 Mrs. Cornelia Paddock began an unfinished serial--apparently a composite of all

¹Overland, IX, 412-19.

²Ibid., XIV, 532-41.

³Life Amongst the Modocs: Unwritten History (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1873), pp. 202-22, 251-57.

⁴Overland, XI, 497-504.

⁵Ibid., XIII, 30-37.

⁶Christian Union, X, 401-404.

lost mine conventions. Her "Lost Gold Ledge" deals with a spot from which Indians are supposed to have extracted gigantic nuggets. Seekers after it are once beaten back by savages; two of them during a second journey succeed in finding the ledge, but both fall into a river and are drowned before leading their companions to it.¹ Stories similar to these continued to appear until the end of the century.² Bret Harte, who rarely does more than touch incidentally upon the theme, makes some use of it in "The Secret of Sobriente's Well" and full use of it in "The Youngest Prospector in Calaveras." A child, in the second-named story discovers gold, but balks at revealing his lode, and he dies with the secret. In vain, prospectors seek to find it, until eventually it is discovered accidentally by a blacksmith.³

A frequent element (but rarely a main incident) of Western fiction was provided by the ways in which mining strikes might occur. That gold deposits actually have been discovered through freakish chance is a fact not to be doubted; and story writers vied with one another in devising such chances. A character in one tale, while stooping to pluck a wild flower, is made to find

¹Western Galaxy, I (April, May, 1888), 169-80, 322-34.

²K. Munroe's The Golden Days of '49 (1889) and J. Altshelter's The Hidden Mine (New York: Continental Publishing Co., 1898) both have bloody chases after lost mines to which secret maps give guidance. In K. P. Sieghold's "The Enchanted Mountains" (May, 1894) two Indians who find a lost mine are slain by spies; their mother, who knows the secret, runs mad, and after twenty years dies; an Indian drunkard who discovers the mine burns to death; two Spaniards obtain a map of the locality but are unsuccessful in their quest; Overland, Second Series, XXIII, 550-52. The hero of Quien's "After the Fire" searches unsuccessfully for a lost ledge, then gives up to become a mail carrier; ibid., Second Series, XXIII (January, February, 1894), 101-108, 150-65. For stories similar to Mark Twain's account of Whiteman, cf., T. Evans, "The Pioneers of Norway Flat," ibid., XV (December, 1875), 580-84; E. M. Ludlum, "The Girl at Glaser's," Harper's Monthly, C (February, 1900), 456-66.

³Harte borrows the curse motif in two stories not connected with lost mines. Indians in "Maruja" (1885) are said to have invoked evil upon the lands of Padres who enslaved them; the Padres, when driven away, have placed another curse upon the lands; no misfortune follows to the present possessors. In the "Millionaire of Rough-and-Ready" (1887), however, insanity and death befall a miner because the Bishop of Monterey once pronounced a curse upon any one who should defile the land whereon his claim happens to be situated.

precious metal clinging to the roots.¹ As a second fictional character runs in pursuit of his horse, it tears up a vine, disclosing gold.² A third shoots a mountain lion which scratches up gold in its dying bound.³ Gold is unearthed again when a weary youth dynamites a tunnel in order to impel his prospective father-in-law to return to the farm and abandon a supposedly profitless claim.⁴ Melted silver pours from a ledge when a miner's cabin burns.⁵ A man works an apparently worthless mine out of loyalty to his deceased partner and devotion to his partner's small daughter; the mine caves in, killing him, but uncovering an enormous heritage for the orphan.⁶ Harte, like other writers, indulged repeatedly in such amazing or preposterous coincidences. A maiden, in his "Jack and Jill of the Sierras," stumbling over a cliff into the arms of a discouraged miner, brings the desired gold into view as she falls. Three children, in his "The Queen of the Pirate Isles," slide down a hill; one is carrying a doll with a detachable wig; the detachable wig becomes lost, and a miner who risks his limbs to recover it finds the plaything dangling from the very outcropping for which he and his friends have long toiled.

California earthquakes and, in a lesser degree, San Francisco fires were a boon to seekers of fictitious marvels. "Truly, truth is stranger than fiction; and romance dwindles into insignificance, when contrasted with thrilling realities," writes Mrs. D. B. Bates in the late 1850's. She tells a supposedly authentic anecdote of a lady who imperils her life in a San Francisco fire to rescue a sick man; he proves to be none other than the constant lover who has sought her for eighteen years after having

¹M. E. Stickney, "The Old Silver Trail," Lippincott's, LVI (December, 1895), 723-92.

²K. Munroe, The Golden Days of '49 (1889).

³J. Autscheler, The Hidden Mine (1898).

⁴F. Lynde, "The Strike in Pinon Gulch," Lippincott's, LVI, (July, 1895), 95-99.

⁵R. Raymond, "Thanksgiving Joe," Christian Union, X (November 25, 1874), 401-404.

⁶F. Heermans, "Shingles," Thirteen Stories of the Far West (1887), pp. 9-24.

been separated when a child.¹ One month before the Overland was started, Margaret Hosmer produced a work of fiction about lovers, separated in the East, who are reunited in San Francisco. Terrified by an earthquake the heroine flees from her lodgings and falls into the arms of her long-lost sweetheart, who has fled from a neighboring building.² In another story a Spanish lady jilts her suitor, an earthquake causes part of a house to fall upon his head, and, seeing him lie wounded, she relents.³ While a lover is waiting on top of a dam to fight a duel with his Spanish rival, an earthquake splits the dam; he leaps into the water, stops the leak with his body, and dies a hero.⁴ Harte in no less than six stories relies upon earthquakes to bring about unexpected changes in the course of events. In one of his tales the author has taken lodging at a hotel, when a temblor causes both the door of his room and that of the room opposite to fly open. He sees the wife of his absent friend, Enriquez, in the arms of a man. At the ranch of Enriquez, meanwhile, a door likewise swings open and through it Enriquez himself beholds a telepathic vision of the scene in the hotel. Accepting the vision as a portent, he takes his infant son, mounts a horse, and, while galloping over the plains, is swallowed up by a second quake.⁵ The novel, Gabriel Conroy, depends upon temblors as an essential force in the unraveling of its plot: an earthquake swallows up the swindler's mine, an earthquake causes complications through the loss of important papers, and the same phenomenon of nature, by throwing down heavy particles of a building, saves the hero from dying at the hands of over-diligent vigilantes. A fanciful earthquake occurs in Harte's "In a Hollow of the Hills": just as Collinson's wife runs away with another man, an earthquake stops

¹Mrs. D. B. Bates, Incidents on Land and Water, or Four Years on the Pacific Coast (10th ed.; Boston: Published for the author, 1860), pp. 172-78.

²"To Please Aunt Martha," Lippincott's, I (June, 1868), 630-38.

³J. D. Mason, "One Way to Get a Rancho," Overland, Second Series, XXIII (March, 1894), 250-67.

⁴A. M. Kerr, "At the Dam of San Marko," Cosmopolitan, XI (July, 1891), 312-24.

⁵"The Passing of Enriquez."

the flow of water in his mill stream. On her return to Collinson's home ten years after, there is another quake; both he and she are killed, and the water flows once more. This second quake conveniently disposes of a band of outlaws who have brought fraudulent suit against the hero's mine. In "Through the Santa-Clara Wheat" a temblor prevents the heroine from making an unfortunate marriage. In "The Youngest Miss Piper" a temblor breaks a dam at the psychological moment. In "Liberty Jones's Discovery," at the proper time, an earthquake disposes of the heroine's father.

With the foregoing items of local color "machinery" there should be classed the institution of the vigilance committee. When not used for the mere purpose of dispatching surplus characters, it plays a rather notorious role, slaying innocent people and bungling the execution of justice. In one work vigilantes who set out to punish a Mexican criminal mistake his lawyer for him and lynch the lawyer.¹ In another they are on the point of hanging an innocent man whom their vice-president suddenly recognizes to be an old schoolmate; he manages to stay his comrades until, in the nick of time, the real culprit is captured.² Again, they offer "fair trial" to an apparent horse-thief, but an excited guard precipitately shoots the man.³ E. W. Carpenter tells how they attempt to extort confession from a bandit by partially hanging him; before they achieve their aim, he outwits them and escapes unpunished.⁴ In one story, they learn that the supposed horsethief whom they have slain is a woman in disguise, and they agree to disband their organization.⁵ In some fiction the committee is led by a criminal, who is covering his own guilt or wreaking his hate upon an innocent victim.⁶ In a number of stories

¹J. Armstrong, "The Disappearance of Robert Fairway," Overland, VII (August, 1871), 121-29.

²J. Thornbury, "The Vigilants' Mistake," Lippincott's, XVI (August, 1875), 205-18.

³L. Kip, "Coyote Cañon," Overland, IX (July, 1872), 27-38.

⁴"Dips, Spurs, and Angles," ibid., X (February, 1873), 105-15.

⁵E. Jakeman, "Lynch Law's Last Victim," Western Galaxy, I (May, 1888), 422-28.

⁶Harte, Gabriel Conroy; Miller, '49; B. R., "The Kanoóngville Tragedy," Southern Magazine, XII (May, 1873), 513-37; E. H. Clough, "Why they Lynched Him," Californian, I (January, 1880), 30-39.

the woman and baby motif is mingled with the vigilante theme. Mrs. Neall's "It Happened in Fifty-six" tells of a criminal's wife who keeps the vigilantes at bay, calling them by name and accusing them of being more to blame than her husband for the crime--since they themselves have led him to drink and to gamble; so eloquent is she, that some of the men promise to forego the future use of alcohol; meantime, the culprit, transvested in his wife's garments, flees away.¹ J. C. Ver-Planck's "His New Birth" tells how an aged mother saves her son by haranguing a committee in similar fashion.² Again, in a pseudo-historical sketch the lynching of an innocent sea captain is checked by the appearance of his seven-year-old son:

Bursting through the crowd with a piercing cry that startled everybody, and stopped the proceedings, there came a fair-haired boy of seven years with a handsome face pale with fright.

"Father! father!" he cried. "You must not kill him, he is my father, and mamma is dead. Please don't kill him: he is good. Please don't."

There was a perceptible shudder in the crowd; but the boy did what Waterman and Douglass could not have done with all their courage and revolvers, what the most eloquent reverend in the land could not have done, . . . what seemed impossible to do,--he melted that mob. . . .

The self-appointed sheriff slunk away. . . . Then the boy was grabbed by a tall and stalwart half-drunken miner, . . . and on the shoulders of this son of the Sierras the little hero of the hour led the procession to the Occidental.³

In a ballad of the Pike County sort a miner who believes that his sluice box is being pillaged puts a marked nugget into it. When the nugget disappears, vigilantes search out the man who possesses it and prepare to hang him. At the crucial moment the thief's little daughter appears and announces that her mother has just died. The thief is released, on the principle that no man who is loved by a child can be totally depraved.⁴ A woman holds vigilantes at bay in Mrs. Deas's "The Miner's Daughter"; when the heroine's protégé makes a sound in the closet wherein he lies

¹Overland, XII (January, 1874), 48-54.

²Lippincott's, XXIV (September, 1879), 312-18.

³F. Stinson, "Sovereign of the Seas," Ballou's Monthly, L (October, 1879), 368-71.

⁴H. B. W., "Ike Gives His Opinion on Total Depravity," Californian, I (April, 1880), 385-86.

concealed, a nervous vigilante shoots her.¹ An expository paragraph follows this story, telling how necessary the vigilance committees were in early days but deploring their abuses--often, it is asserted, a committee itself was a group of desperadoes. A single tale in the hundreds here considered has good words to say for the institution:

"I don't never want to see another man whipped, but, after all, the vigilantes kept things straight, an' just look at the difference now. If a feller steals your sack an' pays liberal, he can git a lawyer to punch a hole in the law big enough to ride a mule through."²

In the stories of both Harte and Miller the vigilantes almost invariably appear in a contemptible light. Poker Flat, says Harte, "was experiencing a spasm of virtuous reaction, quite as lawless and ungovernable as any of the acts that had provoked it." In Shadows of Shasta Miller editorializes in this fashion:

Throw what romance you please over the actions of the Vigilantes of California, they were murderers--coarse, cowardly and brutal; murderers, legally and morally, every one of them. It is to be admitted that they did good work at first. But their example, followed even down to this day, has been fruitful of the darkest crimes.³

Legal procedure and elections (and, one might add, wedding ceremonies and even funerals) served as farcical local color "machinery." Fifteen years before the Overland was established it had been a popular custom to ascribe to California or Oregon courtroom anecdotes of the sort related in Joseph G. Baldwin's The Flush Times of Alabama and Mississippi--particularly anecdotes which depend for point upon the display of provincial ignorance on the part of the magistrate or of audacity on the part of the prisoner.⁴ J. Ross Browne, writing in 1865, says of Nevada lawyers

¹Southern Magazine, XV (September, 1874), 286-98.

²W. M. Turner, "How We did it on Scott's Bar," Overland, XIV (April, 1875), 377-81. Mark Twain likewise attacks the inefficiency of the jury system as applied in the West and defends the resort to illegal violence; cf., Roughing It (1872), pp. 339-59.

³Chicago: Jansen, McClurg, 1881), p. 152.

⁴Cf., the "Editor's Drawer" of Harper's Monthly: XVIII (1858-59), 139-422, 571, 714-15; XIX (1859), 139-40, 283; XX (1860), 713; XXI (1860), 134-35, 424; XXV (1862), 854; XXVII (1863), 838. A more or less authentic report may be found in L. Kip's California Sketches, with Recollections of the Gold Mines (Albany: Erastus H. Pease, 1850), p. 21.

and magistrates:

Pay them fifty thousand dollars apiece, and then raise a fund for the subsistence of absentees, and pay them for staying away. . . . After that a court might be organized consisting of three Digger Indians. Keep them from fire-water, and my word for it, their decisions would be as satisfactory as any rendered by the most learned judges.¹

A typical Overland story is Prentice Mulford's "Stony Bar Shore and Its Customers," wherein a plaintiff serves as lawyer for both himself and the defendant and, winning his suit, he lends the defendant money wherewith to pay the fine.² In William Turner's "Pioneer Justice in Oregon" a lawyer offers in court to wager that a certain statute exists; when his opponent flings down three California gold slugs and he is unable to produce an equal amount, he loses credit with the jury.³ The simple-minded and honest magistrate in this work instructs the jurymen to strip the case of all "legal mystifications." Such disregard of conventional decorum and such heedlessness of the minute particulars of the law is an outstanding feature of many Western judge-and-jury stories. Sometimes (in accordance with a universal plot situation, whether it deal with a novice at war or seamanship who is put to shame by a veteran or whether it deal with a tenderfoot in Western society who is put to shame by a native) a lawyer comes from the East, armed with professional knowledge and high in self-conceit, only to be made a laughing-stock by local citizens. In Roughing It ranchers and miners of Nevada who conspire to arrange a ridiculous law-suit induce General Buncombe, an attorney recently from the East, to defend the cause which obviously has justice upon its side. Buncombe enters into his mission with ardor; but his arguments are frustrated by the decision of a tantalizingly obstinate judge, and his fury avails him nothing. Two months later he begins to realize that he has been the victim of a hoax.⁴ In F. H. Loughhead's "Counsel Must Hang Too" justice has long been administered to a camp of miners by the dictatorial Judge Penniman,

¹"Washoe Revisited," Part Three, Harper's Monthly, XXXI (July, 1865), 151-61.

²Overland, XII (January, 1874), 9-14.

³Ibid., XII (March, 1874), 224-30.

⁴Roughing It (1872), pp. 241-47.

who has nothing to do with juries. A professional attorney appears and demands jury trials. Since every crime is thoroughly discussed by all sensible and honest citizens, he is able to impanel only illiterate foreigners. His knowledge of the letter of the law always confuses the judge, and his clients invariably are declared to be innocent. The enraged citizens finally frame a murder case; by declaring themselves ignorant of the suit they obtain places on the jury. The feigned murderer is found to be guilty; not merely is he sentenced to be hanged, but the attorney is sentenced to die with him as an accomplice. One of the citizens aids the lawyer to escape from jail, and henceforth Judge Penniman proceeds to rule as before.¹ In another farcical, if ironic, tale an innocent man is accused of murder. The plaintiff's lawyer, in lieu of evidence, charges him with having frightened children in the gutter. Although the Western village in which the prisoner lives possesses neither children nor gutters, the sentimental jurymen are deeply affected; they determine, finally, that the man must die--since no one has been hanged in that region for a considerable period of time.² In the same story a lawyer whose client is an actual murderer manages to borrow two children, whom he clothes in black and brings to court; the prisoner straightway is acquitted. Where a Western courtroom scene is involved some elements of the farcical tradition are likely to remain--even in a serious work. The judge in Gertrude Atherton's A Daughter of the Vine asserts that a death sentence will be pronounced in case a prisoner is found guilty; he then quits his bench in order to engage in drinking while the jury deliberates.³ In Gabriel Conroy a smart city lawyer appears at a grim trial scene and Harte depicts with humor the awkward discomfiture of the provincial magistrate, who has been accustomed only to trying cases in the presence of such unpolished attorneys as Colonel Starbottle. Closely allied to the farcical trial, in

¹"Counsel Must Hang Too. A Story of Pioneer Justice," Overland, Second Series, XXIII (June, 1894), 633-44.

²M. Stevens, "'Front Name' Dick," Cosmopolitan, XXII (March, 1897), 553-68.

³(London and New York: John Lane, 1899).

its reflections upon Western democracy, is the farcical election.¹ Here the winning candidate is dependent for success upon the fact that he has killed his man or has accomplished some other feat which in the East would disqualify him for office.²

The interest which nineteenth century authors and readers found in Christmas tales, undoubtedly, owes much to the inspiration of Dickens. "The Christmas Carol," with its poor family disregarding poverty and making the most of the festive occasion, supplied a plot situation which could be paralleled easily in stories of the mining camp. A father in B. R.'s "My First Christmas in California" recounts to his children the manner in which he, when a miner, satisfied the yearning for a Christmas dinner by shooting a farmer's pig--and how later, he was compelled to compensate for his escapade by paying the owner a fabulously high sum, in accordance with the California scale of values.³ Miller in the drama Forty-nine (and one of its fictional versions, '49) offers a half-pathetic, half-humorous scene in which his nearly famished hero tries to awaken holiday spirit over a miserable dish of coon-meat. Harte portrays two aged and forlorn miners who attempt without

¹Other Western stories containing typical trials include: B. R., "The Kanoongville Tragedy," Southern Magazine, XII (May, 1873), 513-37; Lovell White, "The Judge's Story," Overland, XI (November, 1873), 457-59; G. D. Keeney, "A Sage brush Alibi," ibid., XIV (February, 1875), 112-22; P. Mulford, "Jack Myers," ibid., XV (October, 1875), 380-86; S. Davis, "A Fair Exchange," ibid., Second Series, III (May, 1884), 499-508. Attention may be called to the following stories of Harte: "Colonel Starbottle for the Plaintiff," "The Gentleman of La Porte," "The Heiress of Red Dog," "The Judgment of Bolinas Plain."

²Non-fictional accounts may be found in the following: L. Kip, California Sketches (1850), p. 40; H. Helper, The Land of Gold (1855), p. 134; Harper's Monthly, XXXVII (1863), 426; Roughing It (1872), pp. 339-40. Western stories containing such elections include: P. Mulford, "The Candidate from Bull Flat," Overland, IV (January, 1870), 89-94; A. G. Bierce, "The Haunted Valley," ibid., VII (July, 1871), 88-95; T. W. Brotherton, "The Miner's Story," Southern Magazine, XIV (February, March, 1874), 108-127, 227-43; J. Miller, First Families (1874); M. W. Shinn, "Young Strong of 'The Clarion,'" Overland, Second Series, IV (September, 1884), 303-319; K. Munroe, The Golden Days of '49 (1899). Among Harte's stories the following may be mentioned: "Captain Jim's Friend," "A Drift from Redwood Camp," "The Heir of the McHulishes," "Jinny," "Two Saints of the Foot-hills."

³Southern Magazine, XI (December, 1872), 716-22.

success to make merry in their seclusion.¹ Stories with similar situations were recurrent.² An ailing child condemned to spend Christmas in a far-off locality supplies a central figure for Harte's "The Christmas Gift that Came to Rupert" and for "How Santa Claus Came to Simpson's Bar." (In the second of these the stock Western motif of a child's influence upon rough miners is combined with the Christmas theme; a miner dares the bullets of highwaymen among other perils in order to secure toys for the sick boy.) The Western setting invited another Christmas motif-- that in which a forsaken miner dies alone, at the very moment, perhaps, when his Eastern friends are revelling. Ordinarily this theme does not constitute the main event in a story, but only an episode which is combined with other stock motifs. W.L. Laffan's "Gentleman Dick" is the story of a lonely recluse in the mining regions, who pines away and dies on Christmas day.³ Mrs. Victor's "El Tesoro" is in part a story of quarreling partners, but in part a story of the search for a lost mine. The first man to find it, like characters in other lost mine stories, meets with disaster and his body is brought to the house of his employer on Christmas Eve:

At the hour when, according to tradition, the Bethlehem Babe was born, Missouri Joe appeared at the door, and made a sign to the master of the house.

"It's a pity, like," said Joe, softly, "to leave him out thar in the storm."

"'Him!'" Do you mean Harris? how is he?"

"The storm can't hurt him none," continued Joe; "and it do not look right to fetch him in yer, nor to 'tother house, no more."

"What is it, John?" Miss Edwards asked anxiously, looking over his shoulder into the darkness. "Has Harris returned?"

"They have brought him," answered John; "and we must have

¹"A Millionaire of Rough-and-Ready."

²N. Brooks in "Our Brother from California" deals with a Christmas reunion of a family in the East, which expects to welcome a home-coming Argonaut; Overland, II (January, 1869), 57-63. Mrs. C. Paddock, "The Lost Gold Ledge," Western Galaxy, I (April, 1888), 169-80, 322-34; Mrs. J. B. Fremont, "The House that Jack Built," Far West Sketches (1890), pp. 13-28; R. H. Savage, The Little Lady of Lagunitas, Book II (1892); F. H. Loughhead, The Abandoned Claim (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1891); Harte, "Dick Spindler's Family Christmas."

³Lippincott's, XII (February, 1875), 220-27.

him in here."

She shrank away, frightened and distressed, while the men brought what remained of Sandy-haired Jim, and deposited it carefully on a wooden bench in the hall. There was little to be told. The men had found him at the foot of a precipice where he had fallen. Beside him was a heavy nugget of pure gold. . . .

They buried him on Christmas Day; and Miss Edwards, smiling through her quiet-flowing tears, adorned his coffin with evergreen-wreaths and flowers. "I am glad to do this for him," she whispered to her lover, "for if ever there was a heart into which Christ was born at its birth, it was poor Jim's."¹

vi. Motifs Arising from Sectional Consciousness

At the time the Overland was founded California was beginning to claim cultural equality with every other state. It boasted not only of its superior natural resources, climate, and scenery, but also of the fact that an unusually large proportion of its citizens were men of education. Essays on California literature and art pointed out examples of enterprising originality which were declared to be impossible in convention-bound New England. Such local pride could not fail to affect Western literature. Usually it appeared under the guise of exaggeration and playfulness. Walt M. Fisher's "Yea Yea, and Nay Nay" is a literary dialogue between a Westerner and an Englishman. Contending that authors who give the greatest pleasure to the greatest number are the most worthy of praise, the Westerner pays greater homage to Mark Twain than to Milton, to Harte and Artemus Ward than to Shakespeare; while the Englishman condemns Western vulgarity and praises Holmes and Lowell, the former goes peacefully to sleep.² In 1870 James T. Watkins parodied the style of travel books which treated Westerners almost as oddities,³ by posing as a Californian

¹Overland, VII (December, 1871), 560-69. Other stories containing Christmas deaths include: Lovell White, "Margaret Hemming," ibid., X (June, 1873), 519-26; M. V. Lawrence, "The Mountain Posy," ibid., XI (July, 1873), 80-89; D. O'Connell, "The Belle of Monterey," ibid., XII (February, 1874), 116-19; T. Janvier, "The Legend of Padre José," Century, XXVI (July, 1883), 449-53; Harte, "A Monte Flat Pastoral."

²Overland, XV (September, 1875), 285-89.

³J. S. Hittell, for instance, observes that, "As a body, the people of California are intelligent" (The Resources of California [San Francisco: A. Roman, 1868], p. 362).

who has gone to Eastern states and examined the inhabitants with inquisitive eyes. Surprised is he to discover that the East is very thickly populated and that Eastern women, on the whole, are well-mannered and intelligent. He concludes: "Perhaps it will be inferred from the foregoing that My First Impressions of the East are favorable? Perhaps they are. And possibly that, so far, I am disposed rather to like it? Possibly I am."¹ Six months after this Mary H. Breck published "A Bit of Eastern Experience," telling how glad she and her husband were to return to San Francisco after visiting the East.² In December of the same year Laura L. White touched upon the theme in her "Kirwin."³ Humorous modifications accompanied these tales. When Mark Twain returned to his native town he found the familiar scenes transformed: "I found home a dreary place after my long absence; for half the children I had known were now wearing whiskers or waterfalls, and few of the grown people I had been acquainted with remained at their hearth-stones prosperous and happy--some of them had wandered to other scenes, some were in jail, and the rest had been hanged."⁴ In March, 1873, Prentice Mulford reversed Mark Twain's experience with old acquaintances. His Westerner, on returning to "Dozeville," is obliged to conceal the embarrassing fact that a fellow townsman has become a sorry scoundrel in California. Though the East is unchanged, he finds that he has outgrown it; and he leaves as quickly as possible.⁵

Other stories of miscellaneous nature depended for effect upon the pro-Western bias of readers. Descriptions of tenderfeet being initiated into the conventions of mining life may have appealed in some degree to this bias. A work directed wholly towards it is Gertrude Atherton's "One of Our Tourists," wherein a

¹"First Impressions of the East, by a Returned Californian," Overland, V (October, 1870), 352-61. Watkins is expanding a popular pleasantry; Hittle says in his Resources of California: "Among the other regular amusements of Californians is that of 'going East'" (p. 365).

²Overland, VI (April, 1871), 373-77.

³Ibid., VII, 505-19.

⁴Roughing It (1872), pp. 569-70.

⁵"Twenty Years from Home," Overland, X, 223-29.

critical New Englander visits California; she dislikes the climate and scenery, calls the Pacific Coast a fake, refuses to investigate fairly the wonders of Yosemite or the Sierras, but is forced after all to admit grudgingly that some day the people of California may achieve the cultural level found in older states.¹ The complacency of the Atlantic Coast is often hit. An errant Westerner in Gally's "The Frozen Truth" accurately describes some natural wonders of California and Nevada to an Eastern literary society, and straightway he is voted champion liar.² In a story by E. W. Townsend a prim Manhattan social leader is scandalized by her husband's Western friends because they eschew the punctilios of conventional decorum, and because--worse still--most of them are inclined to be witty.³ Frank Norris, in "Dying Fires," touches seriously upon the purely cultural advantages of the New West. The hero, who has written a realistic novel of the mining regions, showing life as he sees it and dealing with characters whom he understands, is called to New York by his publisher. Here he falls into the society of second-rate Bohemians and schools himself to meet their artificial criteria. Under their influence, his second novel is a failure. He finally returns to the West, only to find that his first flame of natural genius is permanently extinguished.⁴

Some stories take the rough Westerner of standard fiction into Eastern civilization. In an "Enoch Arden" tale of the 1850's a metamorphosed husband returns from the mines in time to forestall the second marriage of his wife: "The gate had previously clanged; doors had been opened; and now, to the astonishment of all, a stranger put his head into the room. He wore a Spanish sombrero, a shaggy coat, and an immense red beard."⁵ Noah Brooks,

¹Overland, Second Series, I (March, 1883), 301-304.

²Ibid., XV (October, 1875), 320-28.

³"How to Be Esteemed, though Witty," in "Chimmie Fadden," Major Max, and Other Stories (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1895), pp. 313-18.

⁴The Third Circle (New York: John Lane, 1909), pp. 213-34.

⁵Anonymous, "Archibald Blossom, Bachelor," Harper's Monthly, XVII (July, 1858), 213-21.

in October, 1868, elaborated upon a similar scene in his humorous sketch, "The Gentleman from Reno," wherein he describes the sensations of a fastidious Eastern wife when her husband's former mining partner pays a visit to her home; at first his uncouth manners terrify and shock her, but finally he wins his way into her heart.¹ Three months later Brooks returned to the situation in "Our Brother from California."² In Roughing It Mark Twain pictures the clownish conduct of two California "nabobs" as they enjoy the sights of New York. One "nabob" charts an omnibus and invites the amazed passengers to ride at his expense, but when he discovers a Chinaman among them he gets off lest soon he be riding with a Negro.³ In B. R.'s "Uncle Johnny" a California Indian fighter and hunter is taken to the East and for the first time in his life induced to enter a church. He leaps to his feet peering right and left to find the source of the choir music, and when he discovers that the singers are children his Western heart is greatly affected.⁴

It is this "Davy Crockett" aspect of the East and West motif which Harte most frequently employs. His uncouth Western visitant displays invincible shrewdness in unravelling complications too entangled for the Eastern mind or in saving friends from the wiles of a villain.⁵ Harte glories in contrasting the honesty and boldness of a muscular Pacific Coast hero with the snobbery, the prudery, the smugness, or the out-and-out hypocrisy of the New Englander.⁶ In "The Great Deadwood Mystery" a New England lady who has visited California and fallen in love with her guide takes him with her to Boston. Straightway the tongue

¹Overland, I, 379-84.

²Ibid., II (January, 1869), 57-63.

³Roughing It (1872), pp. 325-28.

⁴Southern Magazine, XII (January, 1873), 35-43.

⁵"Jimmy's Big Brother from California," "Mrs. Skaggs's Husbands," "Their Uncle from California." In "The Man from Solano" an apparently gullible Californian gets the better of all Eastern sharpers.

⁶"The Argonauts of North Liberty," "The Crusade of the Excelsior," "Colonel Starbottle's Client," "Snow-bound at Eagle's."

of gossip begins to whisper:

It was undeniable that the man was wealthy, and evidently no adventurer; it was rumored that he was courageous and manly; but even those who delighted in his odd humor were shocked at his grammar and slang. It was said the Mr. Marvin had but one interview with his father-in-law elect, and returned so supremely disgusted that the match was broken off.

The hero in one story demurs at aiding unfortunate Eastern tourists lest they call him "my man" and present him with five dollars.¹ Miller, too, exalts the muscular hero and contrasts him with the effeminate Easterner. He relates how a New York dude is converted into a gun-carrying miner in less than three months.² In First Fam'lies he describes the claims of his protagonists to distinction:

Be sure you remember that these settlers of the Sierras were as distinct a people from the settlers by the sea as you can conceive. The one was of the West, the other of the East. The one ate codfish and had a nasal accent and sang hymns. The other had never seen the ocean, he detested codfish, ate bacon and swore like a pirate.³

The same spirit of mocking audacity displayed towards the East was displayed by certain Western authors towards Europe. Westerners in fiction travel abroad and find fault with the most celebrated European institutions, or else Europeans are made to cut a sorry figure in Pacific Coast society. Before the Overland began J. Ross Browne practically exhausted the irreverent, if not the aggressive, possibilities of the former idea by publishing a series of humorous travel sketches in Harper's Monthly. One of his works describes a trip to Iceland, where the Western narrator endeavors to convince his blunt-witted guide that the geysers shown him are as nothing when compared with those of California.⁴ In another sketch he purports to peddle Nevada silver stock (of wild-cat variety) among the merchants of Moscow. The Russian populace he finds to be comparable to the meanest inhabitants of the West--the women remind him of Digger squaws, the drunken men

¹"A Night on the Divide."

²"The Cow Widow of Colorado," Memorie and Rime (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1884), pp. 156-75.

³First Fam'lies (1874), p. 219.

⁴"A Californian in Iceland (Third Paper)," Harper's Monthly, XXVI (March, 1863), 448-67.

of Washoe's toppers, and the food suggests to him the more palatable snails and starfish eaten by San Francisco Chinamen.¹ In a third sketch he takes a Digger Indian with him to Germany and notes the effect upon Teutonic lovers of the Leatherstocking Tales.² His works throughout are filled with such remarks as these:

I have my own opinion of the scenery of the Rhine, as compared with that of California; but deem it irrelevant to the material purpose of these memoirs.

Germany is a pleasant country to visit. It must be a pleasant country to live in--for those who have never lived in California.

Mark Twain, whose early inspirations, it will be shown, often correspond to those of this predecessor (with whom he was personally acquainted),³ continued the theme of guide-baiting⁴ and that of comparing Californian with Trans-Atlantic scenery in The Innocents Abroad and elsewhere.⁵ By 1874 Joaquin Miller conceived the idea of using the theme and wrote for the Overland an essay entitled "The River Rhine." The German river, compared with the Sacramento, according to Miller, loses some of its picturesqueness; the Black Forest is inferior to Sierran woods; the university at Heidelberg is contrasted unfavorably with that at Berkeley.⁶ In the year preceding Miller's essay Prentice Mulford published "Justifiable Fiction," which portrays the obligation of lionized Californians in London to impose upon the credulity of society matrons on pain of losing respect. Mulford relates how he himself came to declare that a coyote is a beast with a lion-like

¹"A Few Days in Moscow," Harper's Monthly, XXVI (April, 1863), 596-614.

²"An American Family in Germany," ibid., XXVIII (July, August, 1863), 169-79, 306-20.

³F. J. Rock, J. Ross Browne: a Biography (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1929), pp. 64-72.

⁴The pastime of guide-baiting is used later in C. C. Goodwin's The Wedge of Gold (Salt Lake City: Tribune Job Printing Co., 1893).

⁵See the comparison of Lake Como with Lake Tahoe in chapter xx of The Innocents Abroad (New York: American Publishing Co., 1901), pp. 199-206.

⁶Overland, XII (January, 1874), 65-67.

roar and that a single one can put to flight a whole village. When probed concerning Californian shooting affrays, he confesses, he rose to the occasion. When asked if Joaquin Miller were a very bad man, he admits having charged Miller with every conceivable crime.

I wish never to meet that man again. . . . The truth is we once fought with double-barreled shot-guns, at six paces. We have not done fighting yet. . . . If we meet again--and no matter where we meet--the affair must be brought to a final conclusion. I trust the coming affray may never occur in any quiet British household. . . . We will fight, be it in the church, the theatre, or by the hospitable fireside of the stranger.¹

The theme, however, was short lived. Although numerous stories, including many by Harte, have to do with Westerners in Europe or with Europeans in the West, they contain few expressions of local pride.² A California blacksmith in one of Harte's tales visits England and domineers over an aristocrat;³ a cowboy engages in drunken brawls in France;⁴ a dauntless westerner in a haunted castle unwittingly puts to flight those who come to frighten him;⁵ but, despite the characters in these works, Harte is not given to contrasting California favorably with Europe. The only suggestions of Western patriotism where Europe is concerned occur in such stories as "A Ward of the Golden Gate," wherein Englishmen and Germans are overjoyed to find that a party of American tourists are from California and not from Boston.

vii. Stock Characters

The standardized figures of the "good woman" and the trusty partner already have been described. Other petrified types, known today chiefly through Harte's works, include the gambler, the prostitute, the stage driver, the Pike, the self-

¹Ibid., XI (July, 1873), 39-42.

²Gertrude Atherton's American Wives and English Husbands (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1898) offers a completely impartial discussion of the Eastern, the Western, and the British mind.

³"A Phyllis of the Sierras."

⁴"The Strange Experience of Alkali Dick."

⁵"The Ghosts of Stukeley Castle."

righteous minister, the schoolteacher--and, in a class by themselves, since they frequently are involved with propaganda, the Chinese and the Indian. Although Southern colonels appear in many stories, few resemble Harte's Starbottle.

The figure of the gentleman gambler, gallant and fastidious, brave and magnanimous, had been associated with the mining regions since the beginning of the gold rush. A semi-fictional portrayal of him appeared in an anonymous sketch, "The Green Cloth," in May, 1857:

At one of the monte-tables the game was dealt by a slender, pale, young man, almost a stripling, and with seemingly the delicate organization of a girl--his lips soft, his eyes gentle his attire well fitting and scrupulously neat. One evening an ugly brute burly and blustering, his naturally vicious temper heated to hideous fierceness by rum, seated himself at this young man's table, became insulting, and he assailed the dealer. But before he could make a lunge, a quick, sharp, shot-like blow from the lady-like fist, delivered with scientific precision and force, sent him down.¹

In "The Luck of Roaring Camp," the gambler Oakhurst appears; and associated with him is the spirit of benevolence, the "melancholy air and intellectual abstraction of a Hamlet," and "a beautifully embroidered lady's handkerchief." It was Harte who introduced the gentleman gambler to Overland fiction, and he used the character a greater number of times than all other members of his school. The libertinism of Oakhurst and Hamlin is a unique quality; fictional gamblers, ordinarily, may commit murders, but hardly ever are they licentious. In most tales it is the amazing generosity and understanding of the gambler which is played up. Poker Jim, after redeeming a youth from a career of vice, loses his life saving a despised Chinaman from being drowned.² The name of Monte Dick is an abomination to a timid school-mistress, until she is taken aback to learn that he is none other than the charming man she has seen comforting the foreign mother whose child is dead and ministering at the bedside of a shrewish invalid; as she watches his future career she sees him meet death while trying to save the life of a hectoring drunkard.³ Again, a gambler who has

¹Putnam's Monthly, IX, 530-38.

²G. F. Lydston, "Poker Jim--Gentleman," Over the Hookah (1896), pp. 355-438.

³M. Blanc, "Monte Dick," Overland, Second Series, III (May, 1884), 481-91.

been trusted by a widow to invest her savings loses all in bad mining stock; honorable according to his own ethical code, he robs a stage coach in order to reimburse her. When she declines to accept tainted money, he turns to honest mining until he has earned the proper amount.¹ It is a gentleman gambler who protects a widowed hotel proprietress from the insults of ruffians.² When a Sunday school is to be established, it is a child-loving gambler who supplies the funds.³ When Miller, in Life Amongst the Modocs set about writing a semi-autobiographical account of his childhood, he told how he himself was adopted and protected by a gentleman gambler; whether or not his account be true, the portrait which he gives is undoubtedly colored by the fictional conception of such a character.⁴

Analogous to the bountiful gambler (though much less popular than he among the writers) is the soft-hearted prostitute--coarse and raw to the observer, but inwardly full of tenderness and grace. Harte, again, was first in his group to depict the character. In some stories her heart is melted by the sight of a child.⁵ In others she shows herself to be capable of reckless self-sacrifice or astounding heroism. She may be a foreigner of good family, as in B. R.'s "Murderers' Bar" and Miller's First Families. Miller's novel contains all of the formulae in which this character figures. His Bunker Hill is seen succoring a dying man, to the utter ruin of her rich silks and laces, and later

¹G. D. Keeney, "A Sage-brush Alibi," Overland, XIV (February, 1875), 112-22.

²F. Remington, "A Failure of Justice," Harper's Monthly, C (January, 1900), 261-71.

³F. C. Baylor, "The Shocking Example," Lippincott's, XXX (October, 1882), 399-407.

⁴Respectable gamblers figure also in the following works: L. L. White, "Spades," Overland, VIII (February, 1872), 183-90; P. Mulford, "Stony Bar Store and its Customers," ibid., XII (January, 1874), 9-14; S. R. Brockton, "Lumley's Pardner," ibid., XV (July, 1875), 65-70; H. Montcalm, "The Life-insurance Policy," Ballou's Monthly, XLVII (February, 1878), 156-60; E. W. Townsend, "The New Editor," "Chimmie Fadden" (1895), pp. 321-46; T. Gallagher, "Father McGrath," Lippincott's, LXIII (June, 1899), 823-30.

⁵"The Outcasts of Poker Flat"; W. M. Turner, "Daisy's Mission," Overland, XI (December, 1873), 515-19; J. P. Widney, "The Communist's Baby," ibid., XII (February, 1874), 138-40.

she is seen serving as tender midwife to a "good woman"; finally she herself makes a happy marriage. His Dolores gives her costly ring to an injured miner, and then--

A few days after this, it came out that Dolores was dead. Then it was whispered that she had starved to death. . . . The poor woman had been ill some time . . . never had much money, always gave it away to the needy as fast as she got it, and so had nothing to fight the world with when she fell ill. . . . The ring was an antique gold, with a costly stone, and Spanish name, which showed her to have been of good family. A wedding ring.¹

Stage drivers frequently appeared as background figures, but sometimes as protagonists. In the early 1860's J. Ross Browne felt constrained to publish a pen-and-ink caricature of one;² later he described their distinguishing traits:

As most passengers desire to get an outside seat, except when it rains, it is highly important that you should proceed at once to secure the favorable consideration of the superintendent, who is a gentleman of great suavity and politeness, considering his position. Should you fail in that, I warn you not to climb up on the fore-wheel with any hope of getting the seat of honor alongside the driver; for whether you be a Munster plenipotentiary or a member of the Common Council he will exercise the right pertaining to his craft--order you down, and then enjoy your discomfiture for a distance of ten miles. I have seen respectable men cling to the front railing of stages, with feet uneasily balanced on the fore-wheels, for over half an hour--men worth probably fifty thousand dollars in stocks--and then seen them fail--utterly, miserably, and ingloriously fail--to get a seat. I have seen drivers of stages laugh and chuckle by the hour with some sympathizing chum picked up at the last moment; and I have heard these despotic men say they had a good notion to let every body ride on top, for then the stage would be pretty certain to capsize and break a few legs and arms. Why stage-drivers, who are paid a liberal stipend per month for putting passengers over the public highways, should be so vindictively hostile to the traveling community surpasses my comprehension.³

Mark Twain, likewise, characterized the stage driver:

The driver tossed his gathered reins out on the ground, gaped and stretched complacently, drew off his heavy buckskin gloves

¹First Families, p. 26. The character appears in two non-mining stories by E. W. Townsend: "Anonymae at Pyramid City," "Chimmie Fadden" (1895), pp. 295-302; "The Lady at the Morgue," ibid., pp. 205-14.

²Harper's Monthly, XXII (January, 1861), 152.

³"Washoe Revisited (First Paper)," ibid., XXX (May, 1865), 685.

with great deliberation and insufferable dignity--taking not the slightest notice of a dozen solicitous inquiries after his health, and humbly facetious and flattering accostings, and obsequious tenders of service, from five or six hairy and half-civilized station-keepers and hostlers who were nimbly unhitching our steeds and bringing the fresh team out of the stables--for in the eyes of the stage-driver of that day, station-keepers and hostlers were a sort of good enough low creatures, useful in their place, and helping to make up a world, but not the kind of beings which a person of distinction could afford to concern himself with; while, on the contrary, in the eyes of the station-keeper and the hostler, the stage-driver was a hero--a great and shining dignitary, the world's favorite son, the envy of the people, the observed of the nations. When they spoke to him they received his insolent silence meekly, and as being the natural and proper conduct of so great a man; when he opened his lips they all hung on his words with admiration (he never honored a particular individual with a remark, but addressed it with a broad generality to the horses, the stables, the surrounding country and the human underlings); when he discharged a facetious insulting personality at a hostler, that hostler was happy for the day; when he uttered his one jest--old as the hills, coarse, profane, witless, and inflicted on the same audience, in the same language, every time his coach drove up there--the varlets roared, and slapped their thighs, and swore it was the best thing they'd ever heard in all their lives. And how they would fly around when he wanted a basin of water, a gourd of the same, or a light for his pipe!--but they would instantly insult a passenger if he so far forgot himself as to crave a favor at their hands. They could do that sort of insolence as well as the driver they copied it from--for, let it be borne in mind, the overland driver had but little less contempt for his passengers than he had for his hostlers.¹

It remained for Harte and his compeers to reproduce this arrogance and recklessness. Always, as is Harte's Yuba Bill, fictional drivers are swaggering, domineering, and harsh in their attitude towards greenhorns--particularly greenhorns who attempt to ride on top; they are loquacious among their cronies, and brave to excess when feats of heroism are to be performed. In one tale a rural driver visits San Francisco and is quickly jailed for engaging in a street fight with ruffians who have insulted two ladies; when released he boards a street-car, assaults a fop who has taken a seat vacated for an old woman, and again is arrested.² In another tale a driver lends his services to rescuing a Mormon girl who is about to be forced into a hateful marriage.³ Horace

¹Roughing It (1872), pp. 39-40.

²J. W. Gally, "Sand," Chapters 11-111, Californian, I (February, March, 1880), 101-113, 197-209.

³E. Chamberlin, "My Christmas at Salt Lake," Lakeside, V (January, 1871), 57-68.

Greeley's Hand Monk, made famous by Artemus Ward, Mark Twain, and others,¹ appears a few times in person. A young editor in a story by E. W. Townsend, disgraces himself with his readers by failing to recognize Hank Monk at first sight.² Joaquin Miller wrote a melodrama about Hank Monk's courtship and domestic life.³ Bret Harte introduces him incidentally into "The Story of a Mine."⁴ Missouri "Pikes"⁵ were perhaps the most frequent of char-

¹Artemus Ward: His Travels (New York: Carleton, 1865), pp. 156-62; Roughing It (1872), pp. 150-56.

²"The New Editor," "Chimmie Fadden" (1895), pp. 321-46.

³"Tally-ho," Joaquin Miller's Poems (San Francisco: The Whitaker & Ray Co., 1910), VI, 121-67.

⁴Type drivers occur in the following: G. B. Merrill, "Mr. Shed's Courtship," Overland, V (October, 1870), 335-43; A. M. Manning, "To the Big Trees," ibid., V (November, 1870), 397-403; G. Gwyther, "Sage-brush Bill," ibid., VII (November, 1871), 455-59; F. F. Victor, "Sam Rice's Romance," ibid., VIII (April, 1872), 372-87; E. W. Carpenter, "Dips, Spurs, and Angles," ibid., X (February, 1873), 101-115; M. K. Lawrence, "The Mountain Posy," ibid., XI (July, 1873), 80-89; F. Heermans, "The Widow of the Late Smith," Thirteen Tales of the Far West (1887), pp. 25-40; G. P. New, "The Angel of Murphy's Gulch," Cosmopolitan, XXII (January, 1897), 328-34.

⁵They are characterized in the following manner by Stephen C. Massett: "To those of my readers not exactly 'up' to the meaning of the word . . . I would say that to the best of my information and belief, there is a county of that name somewhere in Missouri, from which locality many thousands have emigrated to California. Now, these 'Pike countyans' are a most extraordinary looking set of people, and though, I suppose, as the world wags, there are as many 'decent folk' among 'em, as in any other portion of the globe, they certainly, in their appearance, manners, and talk, are entirely sui generis, and unlike any other human beings I have met with in my travels.

"The men are, as a general thing, hugely and squarely built, broad-shouldered, very long arms, large coarse hands (whose 'grip' I would advise persons to avoid), lanky legs, with a thigh so long that when they sit down, half a dozen children could squat thereon with ease. Their spare-time is occupied in 'whittling' and 'chewing,'--the 'armchairs' in the different bar-rooms, hotels, and 'loafing' places, bearing pretty strong evidence of their 'cutting' and 'slashing' propensities. They affect slouched hats, generally with a hole in the top (either to hang it up by, or to let the wind in or out), and turned up in front. Peeping from beneath a very ill-shaped and dirty looking patched coat, you will see a portion of a dingy colored shirt, once perhaps red; the nether appendages encased in a pair of tight fitting badly cut 'pants,' the entire suit prevented from falling to pieces by a big leather 'strap' round the middle with a clasp in front with the letters 'U.S.' engraved thereon; a

acter types in Western fiction, although their only distinguishing feature was non-intellectual brawn. It cannot be said that the Pike County balladry which swept America in 1871,¹ with its profane child who has an angelic heart and its ruffian who performs deeds of unexpected heroism, exercised any influence upon the nature of Western stories, for these figures already were highly in vogue. But the appearance of the term "Pike" illustrates the rapidity with which conventions might develop in Harte's school. Despite the fact the characters had been associated with Pacific Coast society since 1855,² no Overland writer noticed them between 1868 and 1871--when there appeared almost simultaneously the two dubiously similar volumes of verse, John Hay's Pike County Ballads and Bret Harte's East and West Poems. Then, in March, 1871, Prentice Mulford introduced a character named "Pike";³ and in April, he spoke of Pike children.⁴ In June, B. P. Avery mentioned a camp filled with Pikes.⁵ In November Clarence King characterized a family of them.⁶ In December Mrs. F. F. Victor took one as a hero.⁷ By 1874 Miller could enter into the vogue with unbridled enthusiasm; his First Families of the Sierras records the history of a "thousand bearded and brawny Missourians"

knife, a pistol and dirty buckskin bag for gold dust complete the appointments; the feet--about the size of 'high lows,' sockless, and unwashed; the beard is worn, as nature originally intended it should be, and the hair--of every indefinite color--is matted, shaggy, and uncomfortable looking.

"Your 'Pike' countyman is not very communicative, and is apt to look upon everything and everybody with suspicion, seldom speaking to you, unless addressed first, and even then his replies will be extremely laconic and unsatisfactory" ("Drifting About," or what "Jeems Pipes of Pipesville" saw-and-did [New York: Carleton, 1863], pp. 243-44).

¹F. L. Pattee, A History of American Literature since 1870 (New York: Century, 1915), pp. 83-98.

²Mention of them is made in the following works: W. V. Wells, "Wild Life in Oregon," Harper's Monthly, IX (October, 1855), 588-608; J. R. Browne, "A Peep at Washoe," ibid., XII (December, 1860-February, 1861), 1-17, 145-62, 289-305.

³"Balty," Overland, VI, 268-71.

⁴"Pete," ibid., pp. 366-71.

⁵"The Trinity Diamond," ibid., pp. 525-33.

⁶"Wayside Pikes," Atlantic, XXVIII, 564-76.

⁷"El Tesoro," Overland, VII, 560-69.

--all from Pike County.¹

The Protestant minister, it often is noticed, usually cuts a contemptible figure in Bret Harte's stories, though the Catholic priest may be depicted with some respect. To H. C. Merwin, Harte is something of a "pagan." Professor Stewart attributes Harte's cavalier treatment of ministers and missionaries to a personal revolt against early religious experience.² But however personal may have been Harte's dislike for religious bigotry, if not for all Protestantism, his type of minister was by no means a unique character in Western fiction. Indeed, any semblance to realism or to the popular conception of the West demanded that the missionary be depicted with very little dignity. Not merely did the nature of the stories frequently require it, but the Pacific Coast had long been celebrated for lack of piety.³ Joaquin Miller, whose views apparently correspond to those of Harte, relates several autobiographical incidents of encounters with ministers of the sort who first went to the West. At one time, he asserts, he essayed to guide a group of them to the top of Shasta; they whined throughout the journey; those who succeeded in reaching the summit triumphantly deposited some religious tracts and started down.⁴ Again, he relates how a missionary presented a printed tract to a completely illiterate Indian.⁵ The zealous, aggressive reformer in early days could not command the respect entitled to the dignified and reserved Catholic priest.⁶

¹First Fam'lies (1876), p. 13.

²Stewart, pp. 14-16.

³A typical report is found in T. T. Johnson's Sights in the Gold Region and Scenes by the Way (New York: Baker and Scribner, 1849), p. 181: "Profanity of the vilest description, oaths such as we never conceived could be uttered by human lips, incessantly filled the air, till Nature herself, awed into silence, withheld her echoes."

⁴Life Amongst the Modocs (1873), pp. 237-38.

⁵Ibid., p. 154.

⁶The tribulations of one missionary are recorded autobiographically in William Taylor's California Life Illustrated. The following passage typifies the spirit of the whole: "On the Sunday morning above referred to, I found no drunken man to suggest a theme, but I met a brother who said, 'good morning, Brother Taylor; what's the news this morning.'"

"'Good news, my brother, good news! Jesus Christ died

The minister is likely to be a laughing stock in the fiction which deals with mining days (though he is not necessarily so). Louise Stockton, writing in the Atlantic, describes how one of them originally became inspired with the missionary spirit:

Like most theological students, he was well read in current literature, and he had learned how often the noblest virtues are found among the roughest classes. . . . He had read of California gamblers who had rushed from tables where they had sat with bowie-knives between their teeth, to warn a coming train of broken rails, and, when picked up maimed and dying, had simply asked if the children were saved, and then, content, had turned aside and died. . . . When men were capable of such heroism, George would say, arguing from these and similar stories, they are open to true reformation, all that is necessary being some exercise of an influence that shall make such impulses constant instead of spasmodic.¹

This missionary never reaches California, but encounters a West-erner in New York and is forced to give him over as an incurable sinner. J. W. Gally depicts a disillusioned missionary being induced, in emergency, to swear at an ox-team. In his story the sophistications of Eastern theology are brought into contrast with the natural piety sometimes found in a son of the West: "'Now, look yere, Parson,' replied Mr. Small, as he got up to bustle about his work, 'fellers like me, livin' out o' doors, has got a God what couldn't git into one of your meetin' houses.'"²

for sinners.' Said I to myself, 'I've got it.'

"So on I went, and took my stand on the head of a whisky barrel in front of the worst rum hole in the city; if there could be a worse one it was at the opposite corner, just across the street. I guess the latter was the worst, for they would not let me preach in front of it. I preached there a few times, and the proprietor sent me word that I blocked up the street, and cut off access to his house, and he didn't want me to preach there any more.

"The next Sunday after I received his message, I stood on a pile of wood about thirty feet from his door, and by way of apology for changing my pulpit, said to the people: 'That man there complains that I block up the entrance to his house, and forbids my preaching there any more. He is a gate-keeper of the way to hell, and is bound to keep the passage clear, so that all who are silly enough to go to hell may walk in without hindrance. He's a generous soul, is he not? Moreover, a man who steals God's holy day, and spends it in the work of human destruction, can't afford to lose an hour of it' (p. 323).

¹"Kirby's Coals of Fire," Atlantic, XXXVI (December, 1875), 699-703.

²"Big Jack Small," Overland, XIV (May, 1875), 446-63. Gally's story, according to the author, was not to be taken as

Some stories ridicule the extravagant sectarianism which seems to have dominated churches in small Western communities. F. C. Baylor's "The Shocking Example" describes the founding of a church in a California village; every passing minister is invited to the pulpit, and the bewildered congregation hears a series of defences of antagonistic denominations.¹ A thoroughly serious novel on the same theme is set in a rural section of Colorado, where Campbellites, Free Methodists, and "Come-outers" battle for local supremacy.² In other stories the minister may be a bigot, disagreeable in character and in creed, or he may be a commercial-minded hypocrite.³ The minister may be too refined for intelligible communication with men who speak only the Western vernacular:

"Are you the duck that runs the gospel-mill next door?"

"Am I the--pardon me, I believe I do not understand?"

With another sign and half-sob, Scotty rejoined:

"Why you see we are in a bit of trouble, and the boys thought maybe you would give us a lift if we'd tackle you--that is, if I've got the rights of it and you are the head clerk of the doxology-works next door."

"I am the shepherd in charge of the flock whose fold is next door."

"The which?"

"The spiritual adviser of the little company of believers whose sanctuary adjoins these premises."

Scotty scratched his head, reflected a moment, and then said:

"You ruther hold over me, pard. I reckon I can't call that hand. Ante and pass the buck."⁴

antagonistic to clerical circles. "If I have burlesqued the missionary society," he wrote to the Overland editor, "I have not intended such a burlesque." Realism is his plea.--Ibid., p.480.

¹Lippincott's, XXX (October, 1882), 399-407.

²H. S. Thompson, Windy Creek (New York: Scribner's, 1899).

³J. F. Bowman, "Abigail Ray's Vision," Overland, VIII (April, May, 1872), 258-65, 436-42; Mrs. W. W. Macomber, "The Gossip of Gold Hill," ibid., X (March, 1873), 209-214; Mrs. H. W. Baker, "My Adopted Daughter," ibid., XII (February, 1874), 63-75; J. P. Widney, "Mr. James Nesmith," ibid., XIII (October, 1874), 315-18; M. C. Graham's "Alex Randall's Conversion," contains a liberal as well as a bigotted minister.--Stories of the Foot-hills (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1895), pp. 114-33.

⁴Roughing It (1872), pp. 331-32.

Scotty, in this episode of Roughing It, "gets religion" and then another aspect of the motif appears, for he becomes a Sunday-school teacher. "It was my large privilege," writes Mark Twain, ". . . to hear him tell the beautiful story of Joseph and his brethren to his class 'without looking at the book.' I leave it to the reader to fancy what it was like."¹ A few stories characterize religious fanatics. Heerman's "Don Quixote de Santa Rosa" will kill any man who transgresses against his standard of ethics;² Frank Norris's Peg-leg will shoot anyone who uses profanity in his presence.³ Although there are domestic tales in which a wise minister unravels the difficulties of others, and although there are several stories (including at least two by Harte) of modern saints among Western barbarians,⁴ Western local coloring encouraged a different treatment.⁵

¹Ibid., p. 338. An entire sermon in Western idiom is to be found in B. R.'s "Father Carter," Southern Magazine, XII (February, 1873), 201-207. Some of Big Jack Small's natural piety is expressed in the vernacular. Such a motif was invited; for colloquial sermons and moral expositions were popular in American literature before the Western school of fiction came into existence. Melville's Moby Dick contains a sermon in nautical terminology; the Negro dialect is used in Uncle Tom's Cabin and it is used in Artemus Ward's sketch, "Colored People's Church." Cf., also E. G. Paige, Dow's Patent Sermons, by Dow Jr., First Series, (Philadelphia: T. B. Peterson, ed., 1857).

²Thirteen Stories of the Far West (1887), pp. 123-58.

³"A Bargain with Peg-Leg," A Deal in Wheat (1903), pp. 61-76. A much tamer character is M. C. Graham's Calvinist, whose guiding ambition is to found a Presbyterian church in a Methodist community; "Colonel Bob Jarvis," Stories of the Foot-hills (1895), pp. 231-44.

⁴R. W. Raymond, "Thanksgiving Joe," Christian Union, X (November 25, 1874), 401-404; T. Gallagher, "Father McGrath," Lippincott's, LXIII (June, 1899), 823-30; Harte, "An Apostle of the Tules"; Harte, "The Bell-ringer of Angel's."

⁵Among the stories in which Catholic Priests are pictured favorably are the following: A. F. Webster, "The Owner of 'Lara,'" Appleton's, New Series, II (April, 1877), 350-57; J. G. Oakley, "A Romance of the Mission," Overland, Second Series, I (April, 1883), 388-96; H. P. Robinson, "The Gift of Fernseed," Atlantic, LXIII (February, 1889), 231-55; R. H. Savage, The Little Lady of Lagunitas (1892); T. Gallagher, "Father McGrath"; Owen Wister, "Padre Ignazio," Harper's Monthly, C (April, 1900), 692-703.

The schoolroom as a setting for stories was as popular with other members of the group as it was with Harte. Any background of local color suggests immediately one basic situation for the pedagogue, whether the setting be a mining camp, a cattle town, or a backwoods settlement. The teacher is to be a stranger in an unfamiliar surrounding and he is to struggle, not merely to gain supremacy over antagonistic pupils, but to cope with an illiterate schoolboard and to win the confidence of distrustful neighbors; finally he is to bring enlightenment to the community. The formula is not unlike that of the good woman who reforms a camp; in fact, writers coupled it frequently with that motif. The characters of Brotherton's "Miner's Story"¹ expostulate against "schoolmarms," declaring the invasion of them to be the bane of their mining lives:

"I wonder if she's a schoolmarm goll darn it, a schoolmarm gits me dead. . . . Boys, I knowed it. As soon as I hearn tell Charley had got a wife, a sort er feeling came over me that she wur a schoolmarm. . . . I don't want no advice, but I'm going. I can't stand no more schoolmarms. Good-by boys. I'm going inter law, and inter politics."

Because of her charming tact the miners here quickly become reconciled to her presence; and soon they are unconsciously her slaves, submitting themselves to her moral guidance and fearing her reproof. The schoolteacher, in turn, may himself obtain a new ethical code or a new view of life from association with barbarous or out-of-the-way society. The schoolmistress in Owen Wister's Virginian (1902) gradually is brought to condone the lynching of horsethieves in Wisconsin and finally she marries her lover even though he has just killed a man. Love affairs commonly are brought into the stories--whether, as in Harte's "Miss" (1860-73), the teacher marry a regenerated pupil, or, as in Eggleston's contemporaneous Hoosier Schoolmaster (1871), he meet some surprisingly cultured dweller in the wilds. The two stories of Harte and Eggleston both rely for their interest upon the character of a unique pupil--of a pupil who, despite compensating qualities of character, is the living epitome of all the local eccentricities which the author is attempting to portray. In the latter work it is Bud, the impetuous and culture-defying backwoodsman,

¹Southern Magazine, XIV (February, March, 1874), 109-27, 227-43.

who yet has moral qualities which the teacher admires and succeeds in directing. In "Miss" the schoolmaster is concerned with a drunkard's intractable daughter, whom eventually he marries. Corresponding figures occur in Harte's other stories of the schoolroom. In "Cressy" it is an illiterate and barbarous girl from the Southern mountains who captures the master's interest and, for a time, his affection. In "A Pupil of Chestnut Ridge" it is a beautiful and indomitable Mexican girl who both exasperates and interests him. Stories by other authors commonly contain an equivalent character part. In Mrs. James Neall's "Patty Dree, Schoolmarm" it is the most unruly and belligerent boy of a town who becomes the especial object of the gentle schoolmistress's attention; she awakens his dormant nobility and eventually marries him.¹ M. V. Lawrence has not a school teacher, but a Sunday-school mistress assume the role of friendly adviser towards a wild mountain child, who insists upon preferring Goliath to David, who captures tarantulas, digs gold mines, and consorts with gypsies.² Similarly the schoolmistress of M. Blanc's "Monte Dick" is both amused and annoyed by an intractable Guatemala pupil.³ The schoolmaster of C. T. H. Palmer's "A Pedagogue Primeval" is exasperated and attracted by a beautiful but stupid Pike girl; he flees his job before her alarming signs of falling in love with him develop into actuality.⁴ In C.F. Lummis's "Bravo's Day Off," a schoolmistress takes especial interest in instructing and cultivating the mind of a Mexican boy, who eventually gives his life to save hers.⁵ D. S. Richardson, playing the role of schoolmaster, encounters a whole room full of barbarians, conquers the boys by physical strength, and falls in love with the girls.⁶ A reversal of the entire motif is found in C. H. Shinn's "Guppy's

¹Overland, VIII (June, 1872), 539-49.

²"The Mountain Posy," ibid., XI (July, 1873), 80-89.

³Overland, Second Series, III (May, 1884), 481-91.

⁴Ibid., Second Series, III (April, 1884), 409-16.

⁵The King of the Broncos and Other Stories of New Mexico (New York: Scribner's, ed. 1911), pp. 133-47.

⁶Overland, Second Series, II (July, August, 1883), 3-8, 173-78.

Daughter." In this half-pathetic story an illiterate and Amazonian mountain girl, who finds no understanding councilor, casts threatening glances at her classmates and shakes the dust of the schoolhouse from her feet.¹ Prentice Mulford, in "Pete," perverted in another way the motif of the fastidious school-mistress and the friendly schoolmaster by assuming the role of an unrefined teacher; not one who despises the conceited ignorance of provincial trustees is he, but one who has difficulties himself when the arithmetic lesson involves fractions--one who retains his position through the power of the town lodge, despite the protests of desperate parents.²

Another type character, common enough in Western fiction to be included with these which have been described, is the recluse. The bookish hermit of Harte's "The Princess Bob and Her Friends," the scientific Indian of "In the Carquinez Woods," and the literary don of "A Waif of the Plains" all bear some resemblance to him; so also do the hero of Miller's "Last Man of Mexican Camp"³ and Billy Piper, the lonely transvestist of First Families. In the typical story, no one knows whence he hales, or so much as his real name. He is regarded by his fellows with suspicion, usually because of his reserved manner and cultivated speech. Time and again his cabin is searched and found to be stocked with books--often Latin and Greek books. In W. M. Laffan's "Gentleman Dick" he pines away and dies on Christmas day, leaving letters for "her who may be glad to know that I am out of the way at last."⁴ In Clara G. Dolliver's "The Yosemite Hermit" a beautiful

¹Ibid., Second Series, II (August, 1883), 113-17.

²Ibid., VI (April, 1871), 366-71. Other stories containing more or less stock characterizations of the schoolteacher include: H. Roosevelt, "Once and Again," Lakeside, V (June, 1871), 422-34; Lovell White, "Margaret Hemming," Overland, X (June, 1873), 519-26; L. A. Roberts, "Posy's Nugget," Lippincott's, XII (July, 1873), 59-69; F. F. Victor, "Miss Jorgensen," Overland, XIV (June, 1875), 497-506; M. W. Shinn, "Young Strong of 'The Clarion,'" ibid., Second Series, IV (September, 1884), 303-19; J. H. Corbyn, "Buckshot: A Record," Atlantic, LIV (October, 1884), 506-519; C. C. Goodwin, The Wedge of Gold (1893); Harte, "The Idyl of Red Gulch."

³Scribner's Monthly, III (January, 1872), 290-96.

⁴Lippincott's, XXII (February, 1875), 220-27.

lady appears after his death, beholds his classical library, cries, "It was he!" and swoons.¹

viii. Chinese and Indians

Save for allusions to the manner in which Mexicans were legally robbed of their estates, their status in American society rarely was touched upon by fiction writers.² There were numerous tales in which Mexican bandits provided a part of the local coloring, and there were numerous stories in which generous dons figured as models of hospitality. Some writers exploited an idyllic Spanish California, which consisted primarily of passionate love affairs, bull fights, cascarone balls, and occasional combats with pirates.³ The racial problems to be handled with serious purpose by Western writers arose from the presence of many thousand Chinese and of Indians.

From early mining days the former had been considered as unassimilable by the white population. Hinton R. Helper, writing before the Civil War, penned a diatribe against their knavery and

¹Galaxy, XXIII (June, 1877), 782-89. Other stories in which the recluse plays a leading role include: Mrs. F. F. Victor, "Mr. Ela's Story," Overland, V (December, 1870), 556-64; T. Evans, "Shakes," ibid., VII (September, 1871), 221-24; G. F. Emery, "Bristles," ibid., X (March, 1873), 280-86; Mrs. J. Neall, "Gentleman Hanse," ibid., XII (August, September, 1873), 149-56, 242-52; H. Sedley, "Miss Tinsel. A Gold-miner's Love Story," Galaxy, XXIII (March, 1877), 337-54; Miller, "49 the Gold Seeker of the Sierras (1884); F. T. Clark, In the Valley of Havilah (New York: Frank F. Lovell, 1890); W. L. Beard, "Liver's Responsibility," Scribner's Magazine, XXI (March, 1897), 376-86. A college-bred recluse, who knows Latin and Greek, is described in Roughing It (1872), pp. 435-36. J. Altsheuler's The Hidden Mine (1898) contains a recluse of the Natty Bumppo type; he is a woodsman, who lives in a hollow tree, despises gold seekers and disdains to accept gold for his all-sagacious services (until it is forced upon him), and he speaks Latin.

²A fiction writer of the 1890's who did definitely espouse the Mexican cause is Charles F. Lummis; cf., "Bonifacio's Horse-thief," The King of the Broncos, pp. 151-63; "Bravo's Day Off," ibid., pp. 133-47.

³As examples of the Arcadian Spanish tales, there may be mentioned: D. S. Richardson, "A Tale of the Sierra Mojada," Californian, I (January, 1880), 67-90; G. Atherton, "The Bells of San Gabriel," Lippincott's, XLVIII (October, 1891), 478-81; Atherton, "The Doomswoman," ibid., L (September, 1892), 263-65; R. H. Savage, The Little Lady of Lagunitas (1892); J. D. Mason, "One Way to get a Rancho," Overland, XXIII (March, 1894), 250-67.

laziness and favored enslaving them.¹ Chinese immigrants, in the gold rush, needed all of their passive resistance to cope with the general persecution by Americans. They were forbidden the mining privileges allowed even to Australian convicts. When permitted to reexamine the debris of deserted claims, they were forced to pay such universally-levied taxes that even the Indians are reported to have extorted money from them by threats delivered in grotesque pigeon-English. Not merely were they pillaged, but all reports agree that they were constantly abused merely for the pastime of idlers. Throughout the nineteenth century public opinion and popular journalism continued to cling to the verdict that Chinese cheap labor must leave America. Strangely enough, however, the literary world was almost unanimously opposed to this verdict.² Contributors to the original series of the Overland obviously championed the Chinese cause.³ Harte, Miller,⁴ and Mark Twain⁵ firmly sympathized with it.

Fiction followed three lines of propaganda, picturing the Chinese as heroes, as martyrs, or, at least, as a race of human beings whose customs are worth studying. Some authors endowed their Oriental characters with valor and generosity of spirit, having them give their lives, if need be, to protect innocent mem-

¹The Land of Gold, pp. 36-96.

²The one fictional exception in the works here considered appears in the following incidental passage in E. Jakeman's "Lynch Law's Last Victim," Western Galaxy, I (May, 1888), 422-28: "There was one element, however, that carried neither pistol nor knife--John Chinaman, sleek, mild-eyed, cunning, whose ambling gait and obsequious manner it was exasperating to look upon; who, without weapon of defense or offense, is a desperate menace to the land, where, parasite-like, he feeds."

³The second series, beginning in January, 1883, barred discussion of the Chinese issue from its pages until November, when opinions on either side were invited; cf., Overland, Second Series, II, 549.

⁴In "The New and the Old" Miller gives his opinion: "It is not the immigration of Chinamen; for the Chinaman is not in any sense of the word an immigrant. He does not come to stay. I think it would be much better for the country if he did. If the Chinese could be treated so that their better class would come, and bring money, and remain, instead of having their laborers only come, to get hold of a few dollars and then return, I think the Chinese question would be satisfactorily solved" (Memorie and Rime, p. 119).

⁵Roughing It (1872), pp. 391-97.

bers of the race which persecuted them. Margaret Hosmer, already in 1868 the author of two pro-Chinese books, published a novel portraying a Chinaman who braves death to save from a flood the child who has stoned him; when the child's father is murdered he becomes a second parent, supporting the family and eventually tracing down the murderer who has swindled it of its just fortune.¹ The most extravagant episode of this genre occurs in a novel by a Bostonian authoress, ignorant of California (she does not hesitate to speak of "geranium trees" twelve feet high), but stirred evidently by the reports of racial injustice. Maud Howe Burton's San Rosario Rancho contains a Chinaman who loses his life in defending a lady from assault--even so, a California jury is unwilling to convict the murderer.² A milder type of benevolence is depicted in W. H. Bishop's "Choy Susan," wherein a kindly Chinese woman rescues a Mormon girl from being forced into a hateful marriage and joins her to her true love.³ In Harte's "A Belle of Canada City" coolies at great personal risk help a white girl to find her father, who has been separated from her.

Harte's "Wan Lee, the Pagan" and "Three Vagabonds of Trinidad" are outstanding examples of the type of story in which a Chinese character figures as a martyr against American class hatred. In most tales dealing with this sort of propaganda the abuse of a Chinaman is introduced merely as an element in the depicting of Western society. Bierce ironically relates how the man who is supposed to have slain a Chinaman is made justice of the peace and is honored by the church for being a benefactor of Christianity.⁴ In the work of another author bandits are punished because they do not restrict their ravages to the Chinese quarter of a mining town.⁵ Again, a Chinaman is put to death for a white

¹You-Sing: The Chinaman of California (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Publication Committee, 1868).

²(Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1884). Miss Howe's (or Mrs. Burton's) Overland reviewer refuses to commit himself upon the question of whether or not a Chinaman would actually be valiant in such a crisis; but, though acknowledging the fact that California juries rarely fancied convicting white men for the murder of Chinese, he held that in such a case as this there would be no demurring; Overland, Second Series (July, 1884), 106-108.

³Atlantic, LIV (July, 1884), 1-20.

⁴"The Haunted Valley, Overland (July, 1871), 88-95.

⁵T. N. Brotherton, "The Miner's Story," Southern Magazine,

man's crime.¹ In still another tale a philanthropic lady, hoping to convert at least one Celestial to Christianity, employs a Chinese laborer who has been permanently deformed by a pugnacious American; but after she has come to believe in the success of her enterprise, he is further mutilated by a "Christian" and he suffers a thorough relapse.² Both Joaquin Miller and C.G. Dolliver depict self-righteous miners absurdly accusing a Chinaman of insulting a camp's "good woman."³

Harte's "See Yup" is typical of the sympathetic treatment of Chinese foibles, naïveté, and virtues, which occurred in various semi-fictional works of the nineteenth century. His hero responds gratefully to kind treatment, but, after the manner of "The Heathen Chinese," outwits everyone who attempts to impose upon him. Numerous narrative, or genuinely reminiscent, sketches were written to show how intelligent, apt, and industrious were Chinese laborers and servants, particularly when compared with those of other nationalities.⁴

Relatively late in the century, the works of Harte and Miller ceased to be representative of the use to which Western authors were putting Celestial characters. Gertrude Atherton and Frank Norris, among others, cast aside propaganda and social issues; and Chinatown, with its tong wars, opium dens, and slave girls, was exploited as a fit setting for tales of mystery and

XIV (February, March, 1874), 108-27, 227-43. There may have been some historical basis for this incident. Mrs. D. B. Bates asserts that the Chinese added \$3000 to Governor Bigler's reward of \$1000 for the capture of the bandit Joaquin Murietta (who is named in the story); Incidents on Land and Water (1860), p. 142.

¹H. A. Vachell, "An Impending Sword," Lippincott's, LVII (May, 1896), 596-648.

²Raymond Driggs, "Mrs. Van Brunt's Convert," ibid., XLVIII (September, 1891), 359-69. This story is intended to satirize the missionary spirit, rather than Western society.

³First Fam'lies; "Phoebe of Sandy Gulch," Overland, XIV (January, 1874), 74-78.

⁴M. Hosmer, "Mary Ann and Chyng Loo: Housekeeping in San Francisco," Lippincott's, V (October, 1870), 354-61; F. V. Stevenson, "My China Boys," ibid., XXVII (March, 1881), 261-69; E. S. Cummins, "An Honest Heathen, a Study," ibid., L (December, 1892), 783-92; E. S. F., "Domestic Service on the Pacific Slope," ibid., LVII (February, 1896), 268-71.

terror.¹

On the Indian question the literary world stood far less in agreement. Numerous authors, such as Mark Twain, however strongly they sympathized with the Chinese cause, felt only disgust at the squalor of California Diggers.² One story relates how an Indian girl who has chafed under the strictures of her white guardians willingly acquiesces in obeying them after she beholds her native kinsmen feasting upon grasshoppers.³ Pacific Coast Indians might be depicted as heroes, martyrs, or as human beings; but as often they appeared as the treacherous savages of early American fiction. Harte, in "Dick Boyle's Christmas Card," did not disdain to make use of the old pursuit and escape formula. The Indian-hater, who would "as lief shoot an Indian or knife a Greaser as take a chew of tobacco," was already time-honored in literature; in Western stories he occasionally reappeared, sometimes as hero. Though as cold-blooded and ruthless as ever, like the California gambler, he was provided occasionally with a love for children and a tender heart which rendered him subject to tears under proper stimuli.⁴

In general, however, there does seem to have been a recognition of the fact that the original occupants of Western territories were not justly treated by the immigrating race. Ironical allusions are made to the current plight of Indians. J. Ross

¹E. F. Dawson, "The Dramatic in my Destiny," Californian, I (January, 1880), 5-14; H. C. Stickney, "Timely," Lippincott's, LVII (June, 1896), 589-64; C. B. Fernald, "The Pot of Frightful Doom," Century, LII (July, 1896), 369-74; Norris, "Thoroughbred," Overland, Second Series, XXV (February, 1895), 196-201; "Bandy Callaghan's Girl," Frank Norris of 'The Wave,' (reprinted from The Wave, April, 1896 [San Francisco: Westgate Press]), pp. 16-32; "The Third Circle," The Third Circle (New York: John Lane, 1909), pp. 13-27; G. Atherton, The Californians (5th ed.; New York: A. Wessels, 1906).

²Roughing It (1872), pp. 146-49.

³Mrs. J. Neall, "Placer," Overland, VIII (October, 1871), 317-24.

⁴G. F. Emery, "Centrepole Bill," ibid., IV (January, 1870), 83-88; B. R., "Uncle Johnny," Southern Magazine, XII (January, 1873), 35-43; W. H. Kemper, "A Pinch of Snuff," ibid., XII (May, 1873), 610-19; a genuine, unsentimentalized California Indian-hater is described from life in T. Johnson's Sights in the Gold Region (1849), pp. 172-76, 187-87, 198-204.

Browne remarks in 1861: "If we now and then take a pop at an Indian, it is only in the way of practice, and not from any unfriendly feeling toward that race."¹ Harte, in similar vein, speaks of "the frequent use of a casual wandering Indian as a target for . . . practicing rifles."²

Browne was one of the first Western literary men to endeavor to call attention to the gross mismanagement and dishonesty in the government's handling of Indian reservations.³ In one place he pictures a terrified tenderfoot surrounded by supposedly hostile savages, one of whom commands the victim to "eat grass"--the only English words which the Indian can pronounce are those which have been learned from the government agent appointed to supply him with food.⁴ In the two decades which follow, Miller, always a champion of the valor, intelligence, and basic kindness of Red Men, took up arms against the reservations and portrayed them with all the melodramatic horror of an Uncle Tom's Cabin. In his Shadows of Shasta there is an upright planter, the illegitimate son of a Christian Indian woman who in past years was grossly seduced by a noted army hero. There are two Indian waifs, a boy and a girl. All three are set upon by a pair of ignominious agents, both of whom are desirous of the planter's land, and one of whom looks lustfully upon the girl. There is a six months' chase, in which the Indians are traced by the blood they leave upon the snow. In the end, with the second agent's lust transformed to hatred, all three are taken to a reservation and there chained apart until death mercifully steals upon them.⁵ Miller's "Colorado Madge"⁶ deals with the frustration of a fiendish and lustful agent in his pursuit of a half-breed girl, who is fleeing with her aged mother from the murderous brutality of a reservation.

From the problem of these tales of Miller's it is but a

¹"The Coast Rangers. A Chronicle of Adventures in California, I," Harper's Monthly, XXIII (June, 1861), 1-14.

²"A Drift from Redwood Camp."

³"The Coast Rangers, II," Harper's Monthly, XXIII (August, 1861), 306-16.

⁴"The Coast Rangers, IV," ibid., XXIV (December, 1861), 1-15.

⁵(Chicago: Jansen, McClurg, 1881).

⁶Memorie and Rime (1884), pp. 175-87.

step to that of Ramona, which appeared the first half of the same decade, though in literary quality there is the gulf which exists between melodrama and mild realism. It is due perhaps as much to Miller's example as to Mrs. Jackson's popularity that a slight but continuous vogue for stories about the Indian living in a white civilization seems to have gathered head about the year 1884. Harte's "In the Carquinez Woods" (published in book form shortly before Ramona made its appearance in the Christian Union) is a story of a gentle half-breed botanist dwelling alone in the woods; racial problems are coupled in some measure with the motif of the gentle recluse of mining stories, who is scientifically or classically learned. Harte's "Maruja" (1885) has elements which may well have been suggested by Ramona. A Spanish estate, managed (like that in Mrs. Jackson's novel) by a quick-minded Spanish woman, has been menaced by American invaders. Though a part of her land has been seized from her already, she accepts the new regime with apparent submission. The marriage of her half-Spanish daughter with a rich American secures her safety of possession.

Halfbreeds appear in a number of California stories both before and after 1884, but in scarcely a tale is there a half-breed villain. It is difficult, therefore, to accept Professor Stewart's suggestion that Harte's kindness to such characters may be due to the sensitive author's knowledge of his own Jewish blood.¹ In Shadows of Shasta Miller is at pains to imply that one of the agents' victims may have been wholly white. Perhaps the same device which popularized Quadroons and Octoroons in pre-Civil War fiction is again at work. The mixture of races increases the piteousness of the character's plight and tones down any element of basic savagery which readers might expect from an Indian.² It is for the same end, perhaps, that Miller makes the Indians of this tale Christians.³

¹Stewart, p. 16.

²Miller gives the following ostensible reason, however: "To say nothing of the desire of agents and their deputies to capture and possess beautiful girls, it is very important to any Indian agent that each victim, even though he be half or three-quarters, or even entirely, white, be kept on the Reservation; for every captive is so much money in the hands of the Indian agent" (Shadows of Shasta, p. 85).

³A type of story which was popular but inconsequential in relation to other stock forms consists of apparently authentic

Indian legends and obviously less authentic Spanish ones. Some natural wonder, almost invariably is explained by an aboriginal or Spanish love tale. The strangely-shaped pebbles on the shore of Fox Island, it is explained, were formed from the sand scattered by a bereaved chieftain's daughter, whose immortal lover had vanished. There is a giant grape vine at Montecito because an exiled Spanish youth planted it and swore to his sweetheart that as long as it flourished he would remain true to her. The following works contain representative examples: E.P. Willard, "In a Camp at Yosemite," Western Monthly, II (October, 1869), 229-39; M. F. Merritt, "Legend of the Montecito Grape-vine," Overland, IX (December, 1872), 519-22; Miller, Life Amongst the Modocs, pp. 242-46; B. R., "A Visit to the Blue Lakes," Southern Magazine, XII (March, 1873), 310-27; V. F. Russell, "The Haunted Rock at Santa Barbara," Overland, XI (November, 1874), 425-34; Mrs. H.E.G. Pardee, "Origin of the Moon. An Indian Legend of Washington Territory," ibid., XIII (July, 1874), 85-87; Mrs. H.E.G. Pardee, "A Legend of Fox Island," ibid., XIII (October, 1874), 302-304; J. C. Hughes, "A Bit of Indian Folk-lore," ibid., Second Series, I (April, 1883), 351-54; T. A. Janvier, "The Legend of Padre Jose," Century, XXVI (July, 1883), 449-53.

II. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WESTERN MOTIFS IN MODERN AMERICAN LITERATURE

1. Bret Harte

The foregoing survey makes no attempt to take into consideration the whole of Harte, the whole of Miller, or the whole of Western fiction. It is concerned with a single aspect--the use of stock material. It shows that in the later nineteenth century there was definitely a Western "school" of authors who produced hundreds of short stories in a period of fifty years, and that the bond of connection among them was the fact that all relied in some measure upon a number of standardized elements. Citations from journalistic writers and from authors of memoirs reveal that the standardized elements were not drawn from creative imagination on the part of the fiction writers, but were found, it might be said, ready-made. Two questions yet remain to be discussed. In the first place, what is the exact relation of Harte and Miller to the school? How far were they responsible for bringing about a more or less homogeneous body of fiction and how far were they themselves influenced by it? In the second, what is the importance of the Western school in the course of modern American literature? The first may be answered fairly upon the basis of the stories which have been studied. A comprehensive answer to the second obviously is beyond the scope of the present dissertation. It may be asserted confidently that the practice of Harte's school represents not merely the practice of other local color groups but that of magazine writers in general. Occasional references have been made to writings outside the Western circle in order to suggest a connection with literature of less restricted nature. Waiving any attempt to determine the degree in which Far Western motifs may have contributed to literature as a whole, it will be shown that Mark Twain's earliest volumes of note relied in a large measure upon stock elements; it will be shown, furthermore, that the motifs are recognizable in two well-known twentieth century books: O. Henry's Heart of the West (1907) and Owen Wister's The Virginian (1902).

The relative position of Harte in the Western school is more problematic than that of Miller, who--save for some display of initiative in defending Indians--is never a cause of fictional motifs but a product of them. That Harte was an outstanding influence in guiding Western writers is a fact not to be questioned. His prestige came from numerous sources. He directed the original policy of the Overland. Nationally famed, he was invited later to the editorial chair of the most ambitious literary journal in Chicago. He received \$10,000 for submitting to the Atlantic the productions of one year. His works regularly were republished in bound volumes (whereas few writers, save Miller, exploited Western material in more than a single volume); hence, they were not only widely famed, but they were accessible to all. The writings of Bret Harte and copies of the Overland were handbooks available to every author.

But, with due acknowledgment to Harte's editorial influence, it is still probable that the founding of the Overland was a more important factor than he in invoking a Western literature. California, like the frontier localities which inspired Hall and Flint, displayed from the start a tremendous desire for recognition in the field of culture. Even the earliest Argonauts, Helper reports in 1855, carefully staked off sites for future universities. It is inconceivable that an ambitious literary magazine largely Western in its non-fictional content should have failed to publish much localized fiction even without Harte's leadership. (Eastern magazines, however, might not have made a vogue of its material.)

The mechanical ingredients of Western tales, without Harte's influence, would have been much the same; for they were already associated in the public mind with life on the Pacific Slope. Harte did not, as Professor Pattee believes, manufacture a mythical California of his own; he adopted the popular view of it. Here is a passage from a short story published ten years before the Overland was established:

So we talked of other things: of gold, and the placers, and their unimpaired productiveness,--of the country, and of the character the mineral element must stamp upon its politics, its commerce, and its social system,--of San Francisco, and all the enchantments of its sudden upspringing,--of Alcaldes and town-councils,--of hounds and gamblers,--of real estate and projected improvements,--of canvas houses, and iron houses, and fires,--of sudden fortunes, and as sudden fail-

ures,--of speculations and markets, and the prices of clothing, provisions, and labor,--of intemperance, disease, and hospitals,--of brawls, murders, and suicide,--till we had exhausted all the California budget; and then I bad him good day.¹

The exaggerated Pacific society of Harte's fiction was to be found years earlier in the anonymous sketches of Putnam's, wherein vigilantes bungle the lynching of outlaws, a lady-like gambler trounces a hectoring ruffian, a "good woman" reforms San Francisco, and mention is made of Happy Valley--"so called because it is the most unhappy locality on God's earth";² it was to be found already in Western anecdotes of the courtroom in Harper's "Editor's Drawer"; it was to be found in J. Ross Browne's lively descriptions of stage drivers, Western newspapers, and the silver stock craze; and it was certainly suggested in the early travel-books. In composing his earliest notable story, Harte chose the one theme which would have occurred first to almost any author who set about to produce a tale of mining life. The fact that a baby in place of a woman is the guiding force in the plot does not materially distinguish his situation from that in "The Old Adobe" of 1857.³

It was not Harte's material, but his incidental flashes and his technique that can be said to have been new and original; and these were not to be easily imitated. "The Luck of Roaring Camp" has economy of structure, which the rambling half-essay called "The Old Adobe" completely lacks. Prototypes of Cherokee Sal, if reported in books on California life, were scarcely mentioned in the polite semi-fiction of Browne or in Putnam's. California profanity was widely celebrated, but Kentuck's shocking adjective "d---d" had not appeared in any of the scattered Western stories before Harte (nor, it might be added, was it quickly adopted by the school).

¹J. M. Drake, "Pintal," Atlantic, II (September, 1858), 434-50.

²"An Adventure on the Plains," Putnam's, III (January, 1854), 24-32; "The Fate of the Farleighs," ibid., VIII (October, 1856), 384-94; "Frontier Yarns," ibid., VIII (November, 1856), 499-507; "The Old Adobe: A Romance Perhaps," ibid., IX (February, 1857), 169-75; "Mr. Karl Joseph Krafft of the Old Californians," ibid., IX (March, 1857), 265-73; "The Green Cloth," ibid., IX (May, 1857), 530-38.

³See above, p. 9.

When Bret Harte's writings are examined for characteristic artifices which might have been easily adopted by any direct imitator, there is evident perhaps only one which became fairly common in Western fiction. With the possible exception of Miller, it seems, Harte had no apostles among his compeers. The use of a paradoxical moral order, for instance, is his most obvious artifice. Many reviewers condemned it, but almost all of them called attention to it. Considering Harte's prestige, it is astonishing to discover that few authors (unless dealing with the character of the gentleman gambler)¹ went further in this direction than to suggest, after the popular fashion of Dickens, that the most worthy persons may inhabit the lowest walks of society while the most unworthy may put a more respectable appearance. Joaquin Miller was the foremost, if not the solitary, exception. He entered into the spirit of Harte's artifice with avidity and carried it to such absurd or even "pernicious" extremes that a reviewer in Appleton's thus took him to task:

If a prophet is to be held responsible for the vagaries of his disciples, Mr. Bret Harte will doubtless feel a good deal of remorse when he comes to read Joaquin Miller's "First Fam'lies of the Sierras" Mr. Miller makes a parade of condemning everything that civilized and decent men hold in respect; and his social code seems to be that men are "noble," and "grand," and "earnest," and "sincere," and admirable, in exact proportion to their barbarism.²

A second device which practically no writer followed is illustrated in the titles of "A Jack and Jill of the Sierras" and "An Ali Baba of the Sierras." Harte frequently calls to mind some familiar tale which he is paralleling or reproducing with Western paraphernalia.

The mannerism of Harte's which plainly did influence a number of Western writers is his method of endowing provincial episodes with a sort of epic significance. "I regard the story of the Argonauts of '49 as an episode in American life as quaint as that of the Greek Adventurers," he says in a public lecture.³

¹In stories of sentimentalized prostitutes the authors ordinarily adopt a humanitarian or psychological attitude in place of adopting Harte's type of moral order.

²Appleton's, XV (April 8, 1876), 473.

³"The Argonauts of '49," The Lectures of Bret Harte (New York: Charles Meeker Kozlay, 1909), p. 1.

Remarks such as the following occur throughout his works:

But it is told that it was the beginning of that mighty Iliad which shook the financial camps of San Francisco, and divided them into bitter contending parties.¹

One word more, and the opening chapter of a Sylvan Iliad might have begun. But this modern Helen saw it coming.²

Sing, O Muse, the ride of Richard Bullen. Sing, O Muse, of chivalrous men. . . .³

The titles of several stories are heroic: "The Iliad of Sandy Bar," "A Blue-grass Penelope," "A Monte Flat Pastoral." Although Harte's use of classical terminology was imitated rarely, the "epic" atmosphere in his works was adopted by many of the group. Miners were depicted as barbarian heroes. Crises in small Western hamlets were treated as momentous encounters. Often as in B.R.'s "Murderers' Bar," whole groups of men, instead of a few leading characters, form the dramatis personae. Miller seized upon the conception with gusto:

Each one of these camps is a world in itself. History, romance, tragedy, poetry in every one of them. . . . Giants were there, great men were there.

They were very strong, energetic and resolute, and hence were neither gentle or sympathetic. They were honorable, noble, brave and generous, and yet they would have dragged a Trojan around the wall by the heels and through nothing of it. . . . They would have named the Indian a Trojan, and dragged him around, not only by the heels but by the scalp, rather than have taken time or trouble.⁴

I never see one of these old prospectors without thinking of Ulysses, and wondering if any Penelope still weaves and unweaves, and waits the end of his wanderings.⁵

Miller argues that the greatest of men ("world-builders," he calls them) were the '49ers. They were "not only a race of giants, but of gods."⁶ Only the bravest dared journey to California; of these only the strongest arrived. Then the mean-spirited, mercenary

¹"A Maecenas of the Pacific Slope."

²"In the Carquinez Woods."

³"How Santa Clause came to Simpson's Bar."

⁴Life Amongst the Modocs, pp. 3-4.

⁵Memorie and Rime, p. 53.

⁶"Old Californians," Californian, III (January, 1881), 48-

survivors went to the cities and entered business; but the true "giants," not wishing to prey upon their fellow men, went to the mines.¹ By the end of the century, it may be noted, many Californians began to protest against such exaltation of the original settlers. "California," wrote Mrs. Frémont, "resents forty-nine!"²

A fourth artifice, outstanding in Harte's works, classes him definitely as a member of a school of writers who were exploiting common materials and not as an isolated figure in American literature. One of the most frequent devices for manufacturing western fiction, it is pointed out in the preceding survey of motifs, lay in perverting the stock themes and in bringing events to a conclusion directly opposite to that which an experienced reader would be accustomed to expect. For its effect, the device depends wholly upon the fact that the motifs were fairly hackneyed. Had "good women" not reformed lawless mining camps in story after story, Harte's "Transformation of Buckey Camp," with its "bad woman" among upright miners scarcely would have been conceived. "Tennessee's Partner" may or may not have been suggested in some measure by Brooks's "The Gentleman from Reno"; but were it not for the many stories of "Cains" who have murdered their partners, Harte hardly would have written his tale of "Colonel Starbottle's Client," with its extravagantly penitent "Cain."

Harte was not merely a model and a source of inspiration to others, but he himself knew and used the works of others. Though in a great many cases he was the first to employ the conditions of Western life which became standard in fiction, he was not invariably so. It is of interest to note the probable method

¹Life Amongst the Modocs, p. 152. For a similar argument, see C. C. Goodwin's The Wedge of Gold (Salt Lake City: Tribune Job Printing Company, 1893), pp. 74-76.

²Overland, Second Series, XXIII (March, 1894), 332. "No moral purpose attended their arrival," asserts R. H. Savage, in a novel. "No high aim directed their labors. . . . Their influence is absolutely nothing upon the future social life of California. . . . No hallowed memory clings to the miner's grave" (The Little Lady of Lagunitas [1892], pp. 144-45).

"They are neither the business men nor the promoters of social welfare, at present," writes S. C. Garrison, in a short story, ". . . and the miners are mining miserably still, or doing nothing. They belong to a former generation, soon to live only in story,--and the sooner the better" ("Sergeant O'Brien, of Siskiyou," Overland, Second Series, XXII [September, 1893], 264-77).

through which he composed two of the four stories contributed to the Atlantic during his contract of 1871-72. H. C. Merwin is at some pains to affirm that, together with the accompanying poems, the stories involved "a year of very hard work."¹ Professor Stewart is less inclined to credit Harte with any marked display of diligence in meeting the obligations of his contract.² Because all of the stories were published in the back pages of the issues, both scholars agree that they were last moment productions submitted just before the magazines went to press. To Merwin this is "an amusing illustration of Bret Harte's literary habits"; but actually, in the light of current Western fiction, it appears that Harte was unconcerned about the quality of the productions. In finding an idea for the third of his last-minute contributions, "The Princess Bob and her Friends," he apparently conned the pages of a two-month-old Overland and came upon Mrs. James Neall's "Placer."³ Her work tells of a married couple who, after taking a baby girl from a dying Indian woman, endeavor to bring it up according to Christian standards. As the orphaned Placer grows older, the Indian wildness inherent in her nature begins to crop out. She refuses to go to school or to Sunday school, but insists upon making solitary excursions into the woods. Finally upon one of her rambles, she encounters a group of squalid Digger Indians, who regale themselves on grasshoppers; and so disgusted is she with her race that she determines to suppress her innate inclinations. Harte's story deals likewise with the adoption of a dead squaw's child by a married couple. Innate savageness is as strong in the nature of Princess Bob as in that of Placer, and she too scours the woods instead of learning her lessons. In bare incident, the plot of "Placer" is fairly paralleled up to the event which brings about reform; then the progress of the story follows another course. Princess Bob's nature is never subdued; she becomes mistress to a trapper and eventually meets a reckless fate. The style, as well as the later events in Harte's story, is far different, of course, from that of its precursor. Another of Harte's last minute contributions to the Atlantic is "The Poet of Sierra Flat," with its transvested woman.

¹Merwin, pp. 232-33.

²Stewart, p. 206.

³Overland, VII (October, 1871), 317-24.

While no close predecessor has been found, there had appeared, in the final number of the Overland to be edited by Harte, Mrs. Victor's tale in which "the boy was not a young woman in disguise"; and, coincidentally, in the same month with Harte's work, there appeared Bierce's complex tale of "The Lost Valley," with its deceased Chinese character who in the end is revealed to have been a white woman.¹

11. Joaquin Miller

In the opening section of the present dissertation Miller is stigmatized as one of the most thoroughly conventional of American story tellers. A number of the conventionalities in his autobiographic or semi-autobiographic Life Amongst the Modocs have been mentioned. The major part of his Western fiction falls into two groups: one of these embodies the material which appears in the novel First Fam'lies of the Sierras; the other centers about the character of an aged and broken miner named "Forty-nine." The first group includes:

"The Last Man of Mexican Camp" (January, 1872)--a short story²

First Fam'lies of the Sierras (1873)--a novel first published in London³

"In a Californian Eden" (1875)--an Overland serial containing a modified version of the same plot⁴

First Fam'lies of the Sierras (Chicago, 1876)⁵

The Danites in the Sierras--a dramatic version of the novel⁶

The Danites of the Sierras (Chicago, 1881)--the novel with "realistic passages" professedly removed.⁷

¹See above, pp. 4-5.

²Scribner's Monthly, III, 29-96.

³George Rutledge.

⁴Overland, XIV (June, 1875), 549-56; XV (July-Oct., 1875), 79-87, 144-51, 235-41, 355-63.

⁵Jansen, McClurg.

⁶Joaquin Miller's Poems (San Francisco: The Whitaker & Ray Co., 1910), VI, 1-62.

⁷Jansen, McClurg.

The short story, "The Last Man of Mexican Camp," is an amalgamation of motifs standardized already by 1872. Its principal character is a suspicious recluse--fiction in the years 1870 and 1871 had given birth to five such characters. Miller's is an old man who dwells upon a deserted camp site--eight months before the Overland had published "Camp," an essay by Prentice Mulford which made much of deserted sites and of the old men who continued sometimes to reside upon them.¹ Four months prior to Miller's tale the Overland had published T. Evans' "Shakes," the story of a toper who, being ever bankrupt though he earns much money, seems to be a thoroughly undesirable neighbor; he freezes to death, and then letters found in his cabin reveal the astonishing news that he has spent his life in redeeming from mortgage the farm of his wife and mother.² Miller's plot is little short of identical save for the fact that the "partner love" motif is introduced. Vigilantes speak of assaulting the Last Man, who is thought to be not merely a surly miser but a man guilty of his partner's life-blood. A friendless outcast the Last Man dies; yet when his cabin is ransacked for hidden treasure, letters are found which reveal him to have been neither miser nor murderer, but a martyr who has endangered his own life in attempting to save that of a very worthless partner. It is revealed, furthermore, that the Last Man of Mexican Camp has starved to death while releasing from mortgage a farm belonging to his deceased partner's mother.³

¹Overland, VI (May, 1871), 478-81; similar characters are described in Roughing It (1872), pp. 435-36.

²Overland, VII (September, 1871), 221-24.

³Characters resembling Shakes and the Last Man, as one might expect, made their way into other Western tales. G. F. Emery's "Bristles" (March, 1873) has a miserly recluse and social outcast who cherishes in his soul a secret purpose; but his history comprises one of the perversions which happened to most stock motifs. Bristles hoards money for no higher end than that of returning East to flog a schoolmaster who abused him in youth; when he learns that the teacher is dead he dies of a broken heart; Overland, X (March, 1873), 280-86. Bret Harte's "The Man and the Mountain" bears some similarity to this modification; here a Swiss gardener hoards a fortune to return to Switzerland and avenge himself upon his family and the townsmen who abused him in youth by buying their whole village; he returns only to find that the town has been destroyed by an avalanche.

By dint of unremedied anachronism¹ the story is incorporated as an episode in First Fam'lies, and the Last Man, renamed "The Gopher," appears occasionally among the other characters.² The whole of the First Fam'lies is as time-worn as this episode. It has to do with a camp of one thousand brawny Pikes who shoot to kill one another, not because of the presence of a few bad women, but because of the absence of any good woman or child. The especial victims of their brutality are a Chinaman and an effeminate recluse named Billy Piper. A solitary good woman appears, nurses the sick and preaches charity; in one winter the men are "half civilized, almost Christianized." The Chinaman eschews his petty thievery and learns to carry a Testament; the most profane of the miners (known therefore as "the Parson") purges his vocabulary. The woman weds the camp's strongest man(who, as usual, has the camp's weakest citizen for a partner). A baby is born and its softening effect upon the miners is immediate but short-lived, for there arises a scandalous report to the effect that Billy Piper is the real father of the child. Personal violence to Piper is checked by the despised old "Gopher" (or Last Man), who has yet to die and leave his astonishing letters. The "good woman's" character remains blackened until the death of Billy Piper, when it is revealed that this individual could not possibly have been father to the child--for Billy is a woman hiding in disguise from Mormon Danites. Throughout the whole novel there is much incidental use of stock material; there are ten explanations of nicknames, an example of generosity on the part of a gambler, and several examples of charity on the part of prostitutes. There are, moreover, a ludicrous election and two farcical wedding ceremonies.

The entire book is composed in a style of triumphant gusto which almost disarms suspicion that Miller wrote it with the purely commercial intention of transporting American "hits" to the English market, although the fact that it was first published in London might suggest this. (Appleton's reviewer saw in it only a "cynical contempt" for the judgment of British readers.)³ The

¹The hero is reported to have slain his partner back in '51, but the action of the novel takes place in 1850; cf., First Fam'lies (ed. 1876), pp. 207, 230.

²Ibid., pp. 207, 229-48.

³Appleton's, XV (Apr. 8, 1876), 473.

author, in any case, was completely blind to the realistic movement of Howells or to the psychological example of James; he appears to have relished the Western formulae for their own sake. Most Western writers would have been interested in realistic detail at least in so far as to relate how the frail transvestist, Billy Piper, acquires a log cabin or how the "good woman" acquires hers. Miller does not bother even to disclose who the "good woman" is; he does not suggest any reason for her coming to a California camp. He makes not the slightest attempt to adjust his plot to forthcoming events. Stock characters and stock situations are fitted together, but there is no regard for showing how a given character would conduct himself in a given situation. The absolute subjugation of psychological interest to Miller's preoccupation with reproducing threadbare motifs is evident in the changes which he makes throughout the several versions of his tale. The "good woman" is so vaguely characterized that the concluding page of the Overland serial easily converts her into an adulteress--perhaps in 1875 Miller was entranced with Harte's perverse mixture of virtue with vice; possibly with an eye on the market he noticed that the "good woman" motif was beginning to be reversed by other writers; possibly he was inspired by the tradition that no woman could remain true to her husband in California; and, again, possibly objections from the editors of the Overland to further tales of transvestism stabilized the sex of Billy Piper, for in 1875 he is not a young woman in disguise and cannot save her reputation. The "good woman" is a figure to be twisted willy-nilly but not a personality. In the drama, The Danites, Piper is again a woman in disguise; but the discovery of her sex does not climactically redeem the "good woman" from disgrace, for the "good woman" already has been murdered by a Mormon.

A synopsis of Miller's second group of Western stories brings only further evidence of his complete concern with standard materials and of his lack of concern with realistic detail, with accurate characterization, or with unity of plot. The group includes:

Shadows of Shasta (1881)--a novel¹

Forty-nine--An Idyl Drama of the Sierras (1882)²

¹(Chicago: Jansen McClurg).

²Reprinted in Joaquin Miller's Poems (San Francisco: The Whitaker & Ray Co., 1910), VI, 63-120.

"One of the World-Builders. A Sequel to 'The Shadows of Shasta'" (1881-2)--a serial in The Californian¹
(Actually it is not a sequel but a new version of the story.)

'49 the Gold-seeker of the Sierras (1884)--a novel²

"Colorado Madge" (1884?)--a short story containing elements found in Shadows of Shasta.³

Whether or not the works are founded upon the life of an actual person (as Miller intimates), obviously they are related to the Last Man motif. Four of the five have to do with the character of Forty-nine--the oldest inhabitant of the Sierras--a decrepit drunkard, who, being reputedly a murderer and a miser, lives in hermit style. In Shadows of Shasta he has adopted two Indian waifs--a girl called "Carats" (such a technical name may have been suggested by "Placer" in Mrs. Neall's Indian story) and a boy named "Johnny." Carats loves a Christian half-breed, John Logan, whose tract of land is coveted by two greedy and licentious reservation officials, Dosson and Emens. These agents, lacking none of the qualities of villains in stage melodrama, assert their legal power to confine Logan on a reservation, and, after placing \$1,000 reward upon his head, they pursue him. Unwilling to desert his mother's grave, Logan hides in the neighborhood of Forty-nine's cabin. He is inside it when lustful Dosson and a sheriff pay Carats a call, and he dodges behind a curtain. In order to prevent the girl from taking Bible oath to her assertion that he is not about, Logan emerges and surrenders himself to authority. The libidinous Dosson, now enraged, takes all his victims to the reservation; he chains Logan in one spot, Carats in another, and little Johnny apart from either; thus he leaves them to perish. The story of "Colorado Madge," evidently, is a by-product of the novel. Here the lustful designs of Indian agent Snagley in his pursuit of a native girl are frustrated by a swash-buckling mine proprietor.

The Indian propaganda, seemingly inherent in these works, is eliminated from the remaining three. John Logan is dropped

¹Californian, IV, 277-88, 387-98, 496-502; V, 32-36, 130-37.

²(New York: Funk and Wagnalls.)

³In Memories and Rime (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1884), pp. 175-87.

from the story. Carats (who was so-called because she was "twenty carats fine") is rechristened "Carrie" in the serial and "Carrots" in the dramatic version. In one sweep Miller may change the race as well as modify the name of a character; for she is no longer an Indian. She is a "Mountain Meadow orphan"--a cowering saloon urchin--befriended only by the feeble Forty-nine. A young man sent from the East to find a missing heiress discovers this girl to be she and Forty-nine to be his own long-lost father. Dosson and Emens, discarded in the stage version, reappear in the serial and in the later novel, but instead of being Indian agents they are grocers and saloon keepers. Lust is practically banished from their motives and now both are intent upon stealing Forty-nine's rich mining claim.

The only element which remains fairly stable in these works of Miller's is the character of Forty-nine (proclaimed by The Nation to be true to life, since there must have been miners who drivelled in their sober or half-sober moments over "a wife at home and a baby in the cradle").¹ The shifts which Miller makes in his details may be of fundamental importance (in two of the works Forty-nine is made an actual murderer), or they may be trivial (in Shadows of Shasta Carats and her brother have first appeared at camp in the company of two squaws; in the later versions Carrie, or Carrots has first appeared without a brother and accompanied by only one squaw--the squaws of the different versions perish in different manners). Miller's plot again is of no significance; his characters are incoherent; he is merely shuffling the petrified elements of fiction. Though the ingredients of these works may not be so thoroughly Western as those of his other group, many standard motifs are worked in. Because, in "One of the World-Builders" Forty-nine and his son are known only by their nicknames, they unwittingly enter into partnership with one another; they fall out and the former makes an attempt upon the life of the other. Vigilantes are upon the point of lynching an innocent man when in the nick of time they discover the true villain and bring him to justice instead. In the novel '49 vigilantes led by the villains are twice upon the point of slaying innocent characters; and on one of these occasions the victims are saved only by the delay caused when a mother appears and ha-

¹Nation, XXXIX (November 27, 1884), 464.

ranges the committee. The Christmas season is introduced with traditional effect; Forty-nine recalls an agreement made with his wife some twenty years before that each will sing a certain song on Christmas even and he acts upon it. Again, at the very moment that events look blackest the aged hero suddenly strikes gold.

111. The Western Local Color Story

The leading significance of the survey of mechanical Western elements rests, perhaps, upon the light which it casts upon the craft of successful magazine writing in the latter half of the nineteenth century. No credit has been given to any unique material which may have appeared. No mention has been made of intangible qualities of literary art which a writer here and there may have commanded. Nothing has been said of Bret Harte's originality of style or of Joaquin Miller's. The stories dealt with are not all of one type: there are supernatural stories, detective stories, temperance tales, and stories of every genus. But rare is the Western story which does not depend in some measure upon the stock machinery listed above or upon other stock fictional elements which are not so peculiar to the West. Tales having to do with newspapers and news offices, for example, were numerous in Western fiction.¹ Stories of land troubles and political corruption were common.² Such an old stand-by theme as that of the girl who harbors and possibly reforms a highwayman or other malefactor had considerable vogue among Harte and his fellows.³

¹S. Davis, "The Hermit of Treasure Peaks," Californian, I (April, 1880), 313-18; M. W. Shinn, "Young Strong of 'The Clarion,'" Overland, Second Series, IV (September, 1884), 303-319; G. H. Jessop, "The Rise and Fall of 'The Irish Aigle,'" Century, XXVII (December, 1888), 298-307; E. W. Townsend, "The New Editor," "Chimmie Fadden" (1895), 321-46; and many of Harte's works.

²E. A. Walcott, "The Belleville Claim," Overland, Second Series, III (June, 1884), 577-87 and IV (July, 1884), 24-34; C. C. Post, Driven from Sea to Sea; or, Just a Campin' (Chicago: J. E. Downey, 1884); J. Royce, The Feud of Oakfield Creek (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1887); J. B. Fremont, "Besieged," Far-West Sketches (Boston: D. Lothrop, 1890), pp. 53-83; the following stories of Harte: Gabriel Conroy, "The Man and the Mountain," "The Story of a Mine," "Maruja," "Susy."

³M. T. Mott, "Gretchen's Wish," Overland, Second Series, XXII (August, 1893), 170-83; B. Woodbridge, "An Accessory after

It is hardly to be supposed that the authors of Western stories looked upon themselves as plagiarists, nor is it conceivable that they were so universally lacking in originality as the survey of motifs might seem to indicate. It may be deduced, on the contrary, that the demands of editors (and ultimately of the reading public) were a far more powerful factor than was the creative urge in filling the pages of fiction in even the best magazines. The Californian (successor to the Overland after its suspension of publication in 1875) announced in the prospectus of 1880: "THE CALIFORNIAN will be . . . local to this coast in its flavor . . . and edited for a popular rather than a severely literary constituency."¹ If stories novel in their characters and fresh in their situations were located upon the Pacific Slope, they evidently were not to be marketed here or in any other journal; and many of the writers must have been aware of this.

The Overland critics did not lack shrewdness in their judgments upon current fiction. From the time the magazine ceased to be edited by Harte until 1875, when publication was suspended, its reviewers roundly (sometimes, perhaps, venomously²) trounced Bret Harte for his lack of variety--for the very fault most evi-

the Fact," ibid., Second Series, XXVII (March, 1896), 258-68; C. F. Lummis, "A Penitente Flower-Pot," The King of the Broncos (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1911), pp. 117-30; F. Lynde, "The Great Electric Trust," Cosmopolitan, XXIV (February, 1898), 395-404; the following works by Harte: "Flip," "The Judgment of Bolinas Plains," "Miss Peggy's Protégés," "Lanty Foster's Mistake."

¹Californian, I (January, 1880), 90.

²Mrs. Skaggs's Husbands is called, "Another little claim put forth at the instigation of vanity, for a niche in the halls of memory" (Overland, X [April, 1873], 391). Of Echoes of the Foot-hills (a volume of poems) the reviewer has this to say: "It is not so many years since his first flame of inspiration, nursed, fanned, fed between the brown covers of the OVERLAND, was blown abroad into all lands, almost with the suddenness of an explosion. Not many writers in the English language had then such prospects and possibilities; not many writers now of any note at all would be willing to change names with that inscribed on the sputtering falling stick that went up so lately one blazing pyrotechnic glory. . . . Bret Harte, the Bret Harte, is gone 'where the woodbine twineth,' where the plesiosaurus hunts the dodo in the coal-beds of the Carboniferous."

"There is something mournful in it all. Here is a man who, properly applying his transcendent genius, his opportunities, and his young life to lexicography and grammar, might have reached a proud distinction as the Johnson of the Pacific or the leviathan of Western neology, and written a dictionary of mining-slang that would have won him a unanimous admission extraordinary to the

dent in the publications of their own journal. Walt M. Fisher, publishing in the Overland of July, 1875, a rather non-committal dialogue on the merits of California literature,¹ has one character say of Harte:

"When I was a boy and made grimaces, my nurse used to tell me, 'Stop that, or God will fix your face so.' God has done so with Harte; one of the finest and most delicate of human imaginations has been calloused and beaten into a showman's drum."

Fisher, in this work, quotes another Overland contributor, J. W. Gally: "'To tell you the real truth, I do not find the miners and mountain men so godlessly uncouth as he draws them; nor do I find the "gamboliers" so delicately "high-toned;" nor the harlots, armed with alabaster boxes of ointment, hunting holiness among earth's weaklings under the lengthening and bedimmed shadow of the cross of Golgotha--the way in which he seems to find them."² The very number of the Overland which printed these indictments contained an installment of Joaquin Miller's First Fam'lies (appearing then as the serial entitled "In a Californian Eden"). Miller, never overlooking in this work a good opportunity to reproduce conventional motifs, does not fail to include prostitutes who go among a population as "godlessly uncouth" as Harte's, and they are armed to the teeth with boxes of alabaster.³ On the whole, it is probable that neither the critics and editors nor all of the authors suffered illusion concerning the permanent

Society of California Pioneers. . . . He has been building worse than he knew. . . .

"These Echoes of the Foot-hills are, indeed, only echoes --the old sounding brass and the old tinkling cymbal, worn thin and jangled to the old tune; mock sentiment, mock pathos, mock English, dancing the old St. Vitus dance through pages of metrical enigma and laborious epigram. . . . This pamphlet in boards with its beggarly array of empty spaces has, on the whole, no more right to be called a book than the swollen frog of the fable to call itself an ox. This, we take it is the fault of the publishers" (Overland, XIV [March, 1875], 292-93).

¹"Yea Yea, and Nay Nay," ibid., XV (September, 1875), 285-89.

²Gally himself was author of a number of typical Western stories, and, although he avoids using the characters here criticised, it seems unlikely that a man of his judgment could have placed any high value upon them.

³Possibly it was the immediate presence of this serial which caused Fisher to excuse Miller from his criticism, on the grounds that "even his affectations are eloquent and earnest."

value of the fiction published in the Overland and other American journals.¹ It seems that stories everywhere were manufactured even as mechanically as those of Harte are known to have been after he had submitted his pen to the dictatorship of A.P.Watt. Examination of Western local color fiction fully bears out Professor Pattee's assertions (reiterated throughout The Development of the American Short Story) that few nineteenth century writers looked upon the short story as an ambitious and dignified literary form.

Despite their small literary value, however, the Western stories with their stock themes have not been altogether without influence upon the history of recent literature. One cannot examine the foregoing list of motifs without recalling similarities in works of authors outside of the group. Often these may be traced to an older source, but some of the motifs standardized by the school have become fairly entrenched in American fiction and, in more or less subtly modified forms, are recognizable in works of undisputed merit. The schoolmistress in E. W. Howe's The Story of a Country Town, for instance, is introduced with the very qualities which by 1883 had grown most familiar to readers of the Overland:

I remember how generally it was said on her arrival that she would not do, as she was very young, but before the summer was over she somehow convinced her patrons that she would do, very well, as she was thoughtful and intelligent, and competent in every way.

This was her brief history, and before she had lived at Fairview a year, nobody was like Agnes Deming, for she was everybody's friend and adviser, and was kinder to the people than anyone had ever been before. She was a revelation to Fairview--a woman of a kind they had never before seen; one who uttered no complaints, but who listened patiently to the complaints of others, and did what she could to help them. Whoever was in distress received her aid, and I think the advent of this friendless little woman, with her unselfish and pretty ways, did more good for Fairview than its religion, for the people tried to become like her, and were better in every way.²

¹It should be noted that in some of the most conventional tales one finds apostrophes accusing Harte or fiction writers in general of misinterpreting the West.--Cf., J. W. Gally, "Sand, Chapter V," Californian, I (May, 1880), 400-407; R. H. Savage, The Little Lady of Lagunitas (New York: American News Company, 1892), p. 143; G. F. Lydston, "Poker Jim," Over the Hookah (Chicago: Fred. Klein, 1896), pp. 355-438.

²(New York: A. & C. Bonl, 1926), p. 44.

It would be extravagant to contend that the treatment of religious bigotry in such a work as this novel owes any immediate debt to Harte's group; but, at the same time, Far Western irreverence may have done much to pave the way for the solemn criticism of Howe or of Harold Frederic. Even in Far Western tales there seems to be a trend towards a more truthful and understanding treatment than that found in Harte's supercilious portrayal of ministers or the iconoclastic pictures of Hawaiian missionaries found in Roughing It or, one might mention, a distant forbear of Mark Twain's book, "Drifting About"; or what "Jeems Pipes, of Pipesville!" Saw-and-did by Stephen C. Massett.¹ None of these works on their publication aroused the protest which had been awakened by Melville's attacks upon Protestant missionaries. The Western humorist claimed the privileges of an enfant terrible. Between these early expressions of criticism and the more mature, if not less condemnatory, handling of frontier religious institutions in H. S. Thompson's Colorado novel, Windy Creek (1899) there is a steady flow of purely Western stories which depict the faults of ministers and missionaries.² How far the Western school may have served American literature by encouraging in the 1880's and the 1890's the publication of better-known works, such as those of Howe and Frederic, is a question which could be determined only by a preliminary survey of all fields of local color; for undoubtedly there was much transplanting of stock characters and motifs among the various schools. The same prerequisite holds true for any adequate discussion of the contribution of Western motifs to American literature as a whole. That there was a contribution, however, will be demonstrated in some measure by a consideration of three well-known books. Mark Twain's Roughing

¹(New York: Carleton, 1863.) The following passage occurs on pp. 148-49: "The Rev. Mr. _____ of Lahaina, who had resided there at the date about which I am writing, some twenty years ago--was not only very much respected and beloved by his congregation, consisting of native men and women, but passed his days in ease, quiet, and luxury; and I was informed had amassed quite a snug little fortune; and I will here remark, not intending to pursue the subject further of the good or evil effects of the Missionary system, that in all the countries I have visited, the Missionary has been the most independent, has lived the most luxuriously, and instead of his life being one of banishment and hardship, it appeared to me to be one of tranquillity, competence, and ease."

²See above, pp. 46-48.

It, indeed, is a part of that local literature--but also it is an important production in American letters. O. Henry's Heart of the West and Owen Wister's The Virginian, though not of the highest literary standing, likewise are known in some degree for their own merits. To show that each of these is indebted in an appreciable extent to the motifs of Far Western literature will be more to the present purpose than to search out isolated and perhaps more questionable examples here and there in modern fiction.

Even in respect to the later works of Mark Twain it would be difficult to point out definitely the extent of the influence which Far Western motifs may have exercised. Characters and situations slightly resembling them but modified in an original manner are recurrent. If the transvestist experiment of Huckleberry Finn or the transvested woman in "A Mediaeval Romance" should owe aught to Western prototypes, they stand completely independent in their effect from the stories of Harte's school. If the "schoolmarm" and Sunday-school teachers of Huckleberry Finn, Tom Sawyer, and The Gilded Age are ultimately derived from characters in Pacific Coast fiction, the stock traits have been assimilated and submerged so they are no longer the dominant matter in hand. The characters of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn in general conception recall those of Miss, Placer, The Mountain Posy, and the Pike County counterpart, Little Breeches--all of whom are externally-evil, internally-generous children; but it is the adventures of Mark Twain's personages, and not the skeleton conception of the "bad boy," to which the novels owe their popularity. Roughing It, however, and, in a less marked degree, The Innocents Abroad--even though their well-selected material and the excellence of composition entitles them to be rated as "classics"--are not the unique "epics" of a past era which historians ordinarily proclaim them to be. They have outlived their coterie. Considered in the light of non-fictional prototypes and the motifs of contemporary short stories, they retain their present-day value, but they reveal also the professional spirit with which the author entered upon his career and they demonstrate the significance of stock machinery to the early productions of Mark Twain.

Roughing It, like The Innocents Abroad (and one might add the later companion volumes, A Tramp Abroad and Following the Equator), is in part a continuation of conventional travel literature. Mark Twain writes in the preface:

This book is merely a personal narrative, and not a pretentious history or a philosophical dissertation. It is a record of several years of variegated vagabonding, and its object is rather to help the resting reader while away an idle hour than afflict him with metaphysics, or goad him with science. Still there is information in the history of the Far West, about which no books have been written by persons who were on the ground in person and saw the happenings of the time with their own eyes. I allude to the rise, growth and culmination of the silver-mining fever in Nevada--a curious episode, in some respects; the only one, of its peculiar kind, that has occurred in the land; and the only one, indeed, that is likely to occur in it.¹

Again, he says: "I have dwelt at some length upon this matter of pocket mining because it is a subject that is seldom referred to in print, and therefore I judged that it would have for the reader that interest which naturally attaches to novelty."² Professional travelers before him had been literary, descriptive, and informative; or else, like Artemus Ward or like Colonel Jeems Pipes of Pipesville (Stephen C. Massett) in Western letters contributed to the Knickerbocker during the 1850's, they had been largely facetious.³ J. Ross Browne, with his Western, as well as European travels, had been an exception in combining the humorous with the serious attitude, and it is his writings which Mark Twain's books most closely resemble.⁴ In asserting that no previous memoir of the Nevada

¹Roughing It (1872), p. 1v. ²Ibid., p. 438.

³By 1872 one writer felt justified in making this comment: "We observe that our Californian travelers now-a-days go to Europe to chaff that continent and neighboring parts of Asia, and do not at all write such books of travel as Dr. Peabody's and our other Eastern visitors to the old shrines. Nothing is sacred to these sapeurs of old institutions and makers of the new" (G. Nelson Smith, "East and West," Western Monthly, I [March, 1869], 159).

⁴The relation of Browne's European works to The Innocents Abroad (though not to Mark Twain's other works) is discussed in F. J. Rock's dissertation, J. Ross Browne: a Biography (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1929), pp. 64-72. The fact that Mark Twain was acquainted with his precursor is established, and his continuous similarity to Browne is pointed out; but nothing in the way of plagiarism is found. The same relation exists between Browne's autobiographic narratives of Nevada, Arizona, and California and Roughing It. A representative illustration is offered in the respective descriptions of stage drivers which have been quoted (see above, pp. 41-42). Both passages give the reader the same general impression of the subject, and both, with equal success, perhaps, amuse the reader--Browne is the more spontaneous in his comments, Mark Twain the more observing. Other passages in which they handle identical material include

rush had been written by an eye witness, Mark Twain is at fault; for Browne, too, had been there in person. The memoirs of Browne, like those of Mark Twain, are written not from the standpoint of an Eastern observer who records what he sees and comments approvingly or disapprovingly for the benefit of the reader, but from the standpoint of the Westerner who suffers the fortunes of "flush times." He does not merely see worthless mining stocks being sold to gulls at extravagant prices, but he buys them and sells them himself and, perhaps, tries even to swindle a greenhorn. In place of recounting marvelous or heart-touching anecdotes collected from nameless individuals whom he has encountered while touring from city to city, he fills his pages with the colloquial conversation and yarns of comrades.¹ He is fond of picturing eccentric characters. He is fond of overstatement and understatement. The progress of his sketches shifts from serious description to farce, from pathos to rather poignant satire. Finally, it might be added, the pictorial illustrations which Browne himself drew are not unlike those which adorn the original editions of Roughing It. All of these characteristics are to be found in the early books of Mark Twain. They are not imitated automatically, after the manner in which short story writers often

their accounts of R. C. Gridley, who carried a sack of flour from city to city, auctioning it off for the benefit of the soldiers' sanitary fund and receiving it back from the highest bidder; cf., Browne, "The Reese River Country," Harper's Monthly, XXIII (June, 1866), 26-44, Roughing It, pp. 313-19. They include the respective explanations of quartz mills; cf., "The Reese River Country" and Roughing It, pp. 252-58. They include the descriptions of Mono Lake; cf., Browne, "A Trip to Bodie Bluff and the Dead Sea of the West" (Second Paper), Harper's Monthly, XXXI (September, 1865), 411-19; Roughing It, pp. 265-72. These passages by no means exhaust the list.

¹The following passage is one of the many which suggest to the reader the manner and material of Mark Twain. "With all respect for Captain Toby, and great confidence in his general veracity, I never could force myself to accept without some allowance his adventure with the California hare, or, as it is vulgarly called, the 'jackass rabbit.' I have seen several very large hares in the San Joaquin Valley, but none large enough to kick a man over, as the Captain professes to have been kicked on one occasion. To speak frankly, I do not believe it, though it may be true; for I remember some years ago I shot at one in mistake for an antelope, but having the misfortune to be a little near-sighted, I discovered upon going up to the spot that it was neither an antelope nor a hare, but one of the settler's hogs, for which I was subsequently damaged to the extent of five dollars" ("The Coast Rangers, I. The Association," Harper's Monthly, XXIII [June, 1861], 1-14).

copied material one from another; but more of the same type of literature is produced by an author of similar mental turn, who, if he is not a better-read man, at least has a somewhat more skillful command of epithet and phraseology. The works of the latter author, however, differ from those of his precursor in at least two ways. In the first place, Mark Twain is more conscious than is Browne of the conventional travel book technique. In the second, Mark Twain has the advantage, if such it be, of a current vogue for Western short stories, with their stock motifs--a vogue which had not arisen while Browne was producing his sketches.

The statement that Mark Twain more consciously than Browne keeps in view the technique of travel books implies that the earlier writer is somewhat more literary and the later somewhat more journalistic, though the primary desire of both may have been to entertain. Mark Twain, according to his own statement, intentionally gives the reader a certain amount of information, dwelling where possible upon material which he believes to be unfamiliar to the public. Actually, he includes most of the material commonly handled by earlier reporters of the West. His work is comprehensive while Browne's sketches are slight. But though Roughing It is partly one of the conventional books of travel, it contains passages which burlesque its less entertaining predecessors. An early writer, for example, tells of a miner who gazes rudely at a woman, causing her to exclaim, "Why do you stare at me so hard, sir? Have I done you any injury?" The miner replies, in the reporter's most elegant diction:

"Oh! no, madam, I assure you, you have not harmed me in the least. But pardon me; I have been in the mines for the last two years, and it has been so long since I saw a lady, that I must own my admiration of you has compelled me to be somewhat rude in my scrutiny of your charms."¹

Capitalizing upon the fact that such anecdotes were well-known, Mark Twain makes himself the miner who does the staring. For half an hour he waits in line to peep through a crack into the woman's cabin--and at the end of half an hour--"my turn came, and I put my eye to the crack, and there she was, with one arm akimbo, and tossing flapjacks in a frying pan with the other. And she was one hundred and sixty-five years old, and hadn't a tooth in

¹H. R. Helper, The Land of Gold (1855), p. 69.

her head."¹ Because of Mark Twain's dual purpose, this spirit of burlesque is not sustained; but it is recurrent at intervals throughout the book. The moral which he tacks on at the close of his work echoes playfully that which is drummed upon by H. R. Helper and Leonard Kip²--to go West in search of a quick fortune is folly. Many an early writer saw fit to conclude his report with such a warning as this from Putnam's contributor:

In concluding the narrative of this personal adventure, let me give the reader, who has been interested enough to follow it to its termination, two words of advice. The first is, that if he should ever have the hardihood to undertake the toilsome and perilous journey to California overland, he should beware of ever leaving his camp or the road, without first pretty well understanding how he is to get back, and without having a compass in his pocket. The second is, not to go by the overland route at all. It will not pay. There is nothing to compensate for the fatigue, exposure, and expense. It is much better to cross the Isthmus, to go by way of Nicaragua, to make the voyage round the Horn--and better than all, to go--in a horn--i.e. STAY AT HOME!³

Browne gives similar advice:

But then you may have some notion of going to Washoe yourself--just to try your luck. Good friend, let me advise you--don't go. Stay where you are. Devote the remainder of your life to your legitimate business, your wife, and your baby. Don't go to Washoe. If you have no money or but a little, you had better go to--any other place. It is no treat for a poor man. The working of silver mines requires capital. A poor man can not make wages in Washoe. If you are rich and wish to speculate--a word in your ear. . . .

He proceeds to advertise the worthless stocks which he is anxious to sell to the reader.⁴ Mark Twain, not omitting the customary cliché, gives it a fresh turn:

If the reader thinks he is done, now, and that this book has no moral to it, he is in error. The moral of it is this: If you are of any account, stay at home and make your way by faithful diligence; but if you are "no account," go away from home, and then you will have to work, whether you want to or not. Thus you become a blessing to your friends by ceasing

¹Roughing It (1872), p. 418.

²In Leonard Kip's California Sketches (1850), not in his later contributions to the Overland.

³"An Adventure on the Plains," Putnam's, XVII (July, 1856), 213-31.

⁴"A Peep at Washoe," Third Paper, Harper's Monthly, XXII (February, 1861), 289-305.

to be a nuisance to them--if the people you go among suffer by the operation.¹

The establishment of the Overland and the rise of a vogue for Western short stories probably accounts in a large measure for the immediate popularity of The Innocents Abroad and Roughing It; for Browne, as F. J. Rock points out, published his European sketches in book form a very few years earlier and found little market for them. The exact degree in which Mark Twain's choice of material may have been influenced by the rising vogue is, of course, indeterminable, since the stories themselves drew many of their stock elements from the same early travel books which Mark Twain was surplanting and in part parodying (after 1872 some of the stories probably drew material from Roughing It). Western fiction, at least, indicated which motifs would be the most certain of winning popularity. If Mark Twain burlesques the lone woman motif in the passage which has been quoted, he does not neglect to include a serious anecdote about the miners who gather around a covered wagon and demand impatiently to feast their eyes upon the sick woman who is within--nor does he fail to call attention to their generosity after the impetuous demand has been met. "The Luck of Roaring Camp" for several years had been inviting fictive imitation, and Mark Twain capitalizes upon its sentiment by recounting the incident of the miner who pays \$150 for the privilege of kissing a baby. With Noah Brooks's versions of the motif of the returned Westerner already in print and with J. T. Watkins's version in "First Impressions of the East," it was a timely move for Mark Twain to recall his anecdotes of the California "nabobs" in New York. It is impossible to tell if Mark Twain read J. D. B. Stillman's tale of the swaggering gunman who dies of fright when challenged to a duel;⁴ but such stories, at least, were beginning to circulate and a market was awaiting his picture of the hectoring bad man who is put to flight by a woman with a pair of scissors. Between 1868 and the middle of 1871 Far Western "yarns" were beginning to be published in the

¹Roughing It (1872), p. 570.

²For its relation to Western fiction, see above, pp. 36-

38.

³See above, pp. 32-38.

⁴"St. Jo," Overland, II (February, 1869), 17-75.

Overland;¹ tales of Far Western politics were coming into being;² stage drivers were beginning to swagger;³ the Indian hater was beginning to appear in Overland fiction;⁴ the recluse was on the point of becoming a petrified character in Western scenes;⁵ "flush times," lynch justice, lost mines, and earthquakes were beginning to attract writers of fiction; and the time was ripe for a volume of entertaining memoirs which include a more or less veracious picture of all of these elements. Roughing It takes advantage of the occasion.

While Roughing It exemplifies the value of Far Western motifs to an up-to-date professional writer of the early 1870's, just after they had begun to affect the popular market, several of the stories in O. Henry's Heart of the West show that the motifs were not necessarily to be considered obsolete as late as 1907.⁶ The most conventional of the stories is "Christmas by Injunction," which combines no less than three standardized formulae. The plot commences with an expository passage on Western nicknames:

It was not necessary for a citizen to exhibit his baptismal certificate in order to acquire a cognomen. . . . Many were easily dubbed geographically from the regions from which they confessed to have hailed. Some announced themselves to be "Thompsons," and "Adamses," and the like, with a brazenness and loudness that cast a cloud upon their titles. A few vain-gloriously and shamelessly uncovered their proper and indisputable names. This was held to be unduly arrogant, and did not win popularity.⁷

¹N. Booth, "After Dark," Overland, III (August, 1869), 132-34; Mrs. J. J. Robbins, "Jem Catherwood's Vision," ibid., IV (January, 1870), 52-56.

²P. Mulford, "The Candidate from Bull Flat," ibid., IV (January, 1870), 89-94.

³G. B. Merrill, "Mr. Shed's Courtship," ibid., V (October, 1870), 335-43; A. M. Manning, "To the Big Trees," ibid., V (November, 1870), 397-403.

⁴G. F. Emery, "Centerpole Bill," ibid., IV (January, 1870), 83-88.

⁵G. F. Emery, "Compasses," ibid., IV (April, 1870), 313-18; P. Mulford, "Camp," ibid., VI (May, 1871), 478-81.

⁶Attention is called to some of the stock themes of this volume in L. L. Hazard's The Frontier in American Literature (New York: Crowell, 1927), pp. 197-98. F. L. Pattee comments upon O. Henry's continuous debt to Harte in The New American Literature (New York: Century, 1930), pp. 160-79.

⁷(New York: Doubleday, Page, 1917), pp. 271-72.

The hero of the tale is a miner known in his neighborhood only by the name of "Cherokee." Determining to delight every child in the town of Yellowhammer with Christmas toys, he plans to masquerade in person as Santa Claus and he requests the co-operation of the ladies in dressing the Christmas tree. He has not taken into consideration the fact that the "voice of childhood" and the "patter of restless little feet" have never gladdened or consecrated Yellowhammer; he does not consider the fact that the female populace consists entirely of the assayer's wife, the hotel proprietress and the laundress (it is only through Providence that two actresses may be recruited). His nonplused fellow-miners attempt to carry out the scheme by borrowing all the children in the surrounding country; but they succeed in procuring only one, and that is a cigaret-smoking boy of ten who does not believe in Santa Claus. If there is originality of detail in the story, the substance is supplied by the old theme of the miners' tenderness towards children and the old theme of how they are at pains to celebrate Christmas in spite of adversity. The nickname motif is carried out in the standard manner, and the child is finally discovered to be Cherokee's long-lost son. The influence of a child upon rough men is brought to life again in O. Henry's volume by "A Chapparal Prince"; here a band of train robbers and mail thieves abandon for a time their infamous activities in order to deliver an eleven-year-old girl from a life of drudgery in the "Quarrymen's Hotel." Two partners fall out for love of the same woman in "Telemachus, Friend" and again in "The Handbook of Hymen." Newly-rich "nabobs" appear with customary clownery in "The Ransom of Mack" and also in "Seats of the Haughty," wherein one is taken to New York City. Memories of old motifs are brought to mind by "The Sphinx Apple," when a stage coach containing a lone woman among its male passengers is forced to halt for the night at an abandoned cabin which once belonged to a mysterious recluse.

While these stories of O. Henry illustrate the continued popularity of Far Western motifs, The Virginian of Owen Wister carries the formulae into new channels. The cattle ranch as a setting invites such transplantation. There is again the rough, profane, largely masculine society, with its reckless disregard for orthodox institutions and Eastern manners. In the character of Wister's hero one finds the bumptiousness and shrewdness of Yuba Bill combined with the reserve and penetrating sagacity of

Jack Hamlin or John Oakhurst. His famous card game with the hectoring Trampas recalls Hamlin's gambling scrapes and the "lady-like fist" of the Western gambler in Putnam's anonymous sketch:

The Virginian's pistol came out, and his hand lay on the table, holding it unaimed. And with a voice as gentle as ever, the voice sounded almost like a caress, but drawling a very little more than usual, so that there was almost a space between each word, he issued his orders to the man Trampas:--
"When you call me that, smile!" And he looked at Trampas across the table.¹

The passage in which news of an ailing woman breaks up the nocturnal revels of cattlemen is of Overland stamp:

They were now shouting for music. Medicine Bow swept in like a cloud of dust to where a fiddler sat playing in a hall; and gathering up fiddler and dancers, swept out again, a larger Medicine Bow, growing all the while. . . .
Suddenly there was a quiet. I did not see who brought the message; but the word ran among us that there was a woman . . . very sick. . . . Medicine Bow went gradually home.²

The arrival of the prim New England schoolmistress calls to mind many antecedents. When she introduces to the cowboy the works of Shakespeare, Scott, and Browning one remembers the "well-selected" books which the good woman brings to a mining camp in Brotherton's "The Miner's Story" and Turner's "Daisy's Mission." When she is brought to tolerate lynching and shooting and when she marries a scion of the West, one recalls such a story as Harte's "The Great Deadwood Mystery," wherein ladies from Boston are at first repelled by their guides and later fall in love with them. The attitude of the schoolteacher's New England relatives towards the Virginian--their shaking of heads and wagging of tongues--recalls closely the ending of "The Great Deadwood Mystery," which has been quoted above:³

Somebody said to Andrew Bell that they heard Miss Molly Wood was engaged to marry a rustler.

"Heavens, Andrew!" said his wife; "what is a rustler?"

It was not in any dictionary, and current translations of it were inconsistent. A man at Hoosic Falls said that he had passed through Cheyenne, and heard the term applied in a complimentary way to people who were alive and pushing. Another

¹The Writings of Owen Wister (New York: Macmillan, 1928), IV, 22.

²Ibid., pp. 30-32.

³p. 36.

Man had always supposed that it meant some kind of a horse. But the most alarming version of all was that a rustler was a cattle thief.

. . . . In a very few days, gossip had it that Molly was engaged to a gambler, a gold miner, an escaped stage robber, and a Mexican bandit; while Mrs. Flynt feared she had married a Mormon.¹

The standard comparison between the trivial limitations of the New England mind and the careless magnitude of the Western outlook is revived when Wister's schoolmistress shows a picture of the Virginian to her great-aunt:

"My dear, you have fallen in love with his clothes."

"It's not his clothes. And I'm not in love. He often wears others. He wears a white collar like anybody."

"Then that would be a more suitable way to be photographed, I think. He couldn't go round like that here. I could not receive him myself."

"He'd never think of such a thing. Why, you talk as if he were a savage."²

The Virginian's account of his visit to the town of his birth reproduces the situation of Prentice Mulford's "Twenty Years from Home," wherein the Westerner discovers that, though his native village has remained unaltered, he himself is too greatly changed to find a bond of sympathy with anyone save his mother:

I reckon I must have been more ambitious then my brothers--or more restless. They stayed around on farms. But I got out. When I went back again six years afterward, I was twenty. They was talking about the same old things. Men of twenty-five and thirty--yet just sittin' and talkin' about the same old things. I told my mother about what I'd seen here and there, and she liked it, right to her death. But the others--well, when I found this whole world was hawks and turkeys to them, with a little gunnin' after small game throwed in, I put on my hat one mawnin' and told 'em maybe when I was fifty I'd look in on 'em again to see if they'd got any new subjects. But they'll never."³

The character of the humorless and dogmatic missionary who is completely unfitted to exercise his calling among cowboys harkens back to many prototypes in mining fiction. The practical joke which is played upon him by the hero reminds one of how the minister is made a laughing-stock in Louise Stockton's "Kirby's Coals of Fire" or in J. W. Gally's "Big Jack Small." Big Jack Small's remark that a Westerner's god may be too large to get inside of

¹Writings, IV, 203-204.

²Ibid., p. 202.

³Ibid., p. 204.

the missionary's church is recalled by a private acknowledgment of the Virginian's:

"Do you think there ought to be fifteen varieties of good people? There ain't fifteen. There ain't two. There's one kind. And when I meet it, I respect it. It is not praying nor preaching that has ever caught me and made me ashamed of myself, but one or two people I have knowed. . . ."¹

The theme of partner love is not without its parallel in Wister's novel. The Virginian and Steve have shared the same blanket in past years; but the latter has taken to cattle-rustling and the two have fallen out. After the hero has acquiesced in aiding to hang his former crony he is shaken with emotion--not because he has taken Steve's life, not because his ideal of duty is affected by remorse, but because Steve has died without speaking to him, charging him, apparently, with breach of friendship's code. Again, the episode of Em'ly, the hen, recalls a certain type of animal story popular with Harte and with some of his colleagues in Western fiction--that in which a bird or beast or even an insect is portrayed as having a personality and semi-human powers of ratiocination but touched almost invariably with a slight degree of insanity.² The yarns of the lady who, after being frightened by a rattlesnake, gives birth to a child with eight rattles and of the frog-farmers, whose feet become webbed, follow a technique not unknown in Pacific Coast fiction. They depend upon no overstatement or flights of imagination, but they relate apparently serious tales and then in one sentence turn all to absurdity.³

¹Ibid., p. 165.

²Harte, "Baby Sylvester," "An Esmeralda of Rocky Canon," "Jinny," "A Yellow Dog"; M. Hosmer, "Bummer and Lazarus," Lippincott's, XXIX (February, 1882), 200-204; E. B. Wilcox, "Tim's History," Overland, Second Series, II (December, 1883), 617-27; E. W. Townsend, "The Rehabilitation of Casy," "Chimmie Fadden" (1895), pp. 217-25. Similar tales are incorporated in Mark Twain's travel books.

³Among the stories read the best representative of this type of yarn appears in S. C. Garrison's "Sergeant O'Brien of Siskiyou," Overland, Second Series, XXII (September, 1893), 264-77. The narrator makes love to a widow. After his suit has begun to be successful he discovers a peculiar attraction, which seems to be reciprocated, in the widow's daughter. The daughter leads him to a closet and shows him the hats of her mother's many deceased husbands. Her mother, she explains, while not a murderer, is afflicted with white liver. The narrator quits the neighborhood without waiting to inquire whether or not white liver be hereditary.

Yet, despite its episodic structure--portions of it appeared as short stories before the novel was published,--The Virginian is not a mechanical composite of stereotyped motifs. It bears no similarity to Miller's First Fam'lies, wherein every standard device recollected by the author is linked to the rest regardless of its propriety (Miller's camp seems as profane and lawless after its reformation as before) and wherein there is no character portrayal beyond the presentation of stock figures, who in any revision may change race or sex. The figure of the school-mistress in The Virginian, like that in Howe's Story of a Country Town, gains an interest scarcely possible in short fiction, where she can be merely introduced, made to influence an individual or a community, and perhaps be happily married. The Virginian, however, is a work which would not have been as it is were it not for the background of traditional Western motifs. The Far Western authors, for the most part, were uninfluenced by Howells, James, or any of the literary currents which were arising; but the motifs which they popularized have supplied material for the use of authors who have larger aims than that of producing local color fiction and who command a somewhat more sophisticated reading public than did the Overland.

